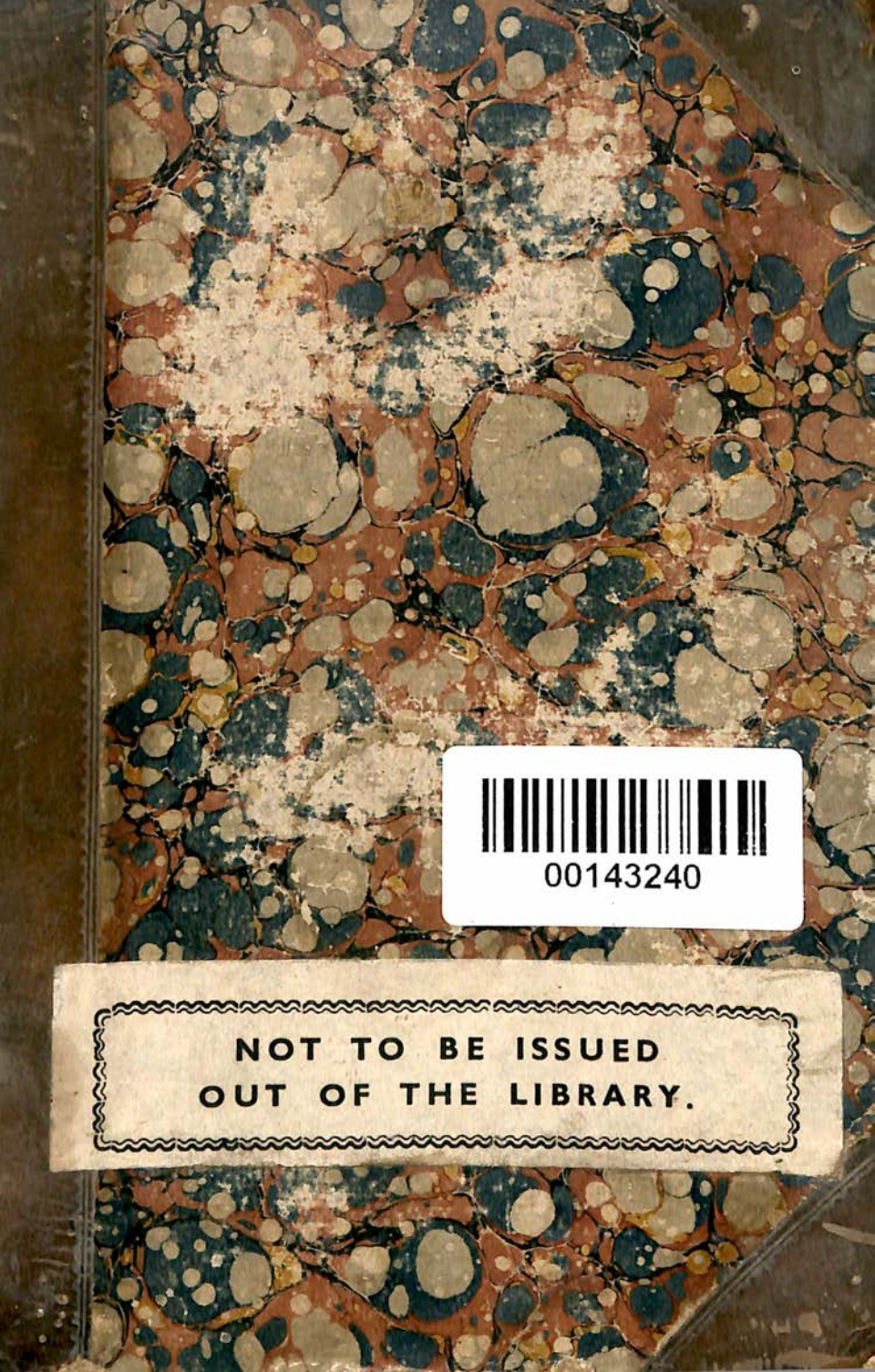
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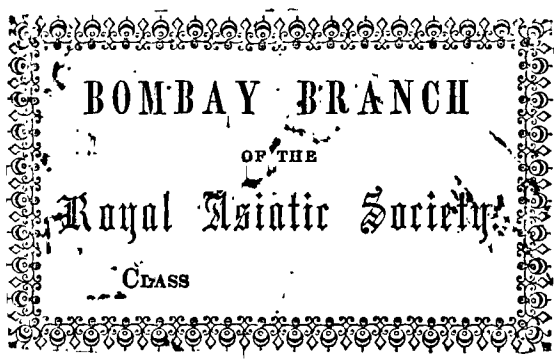

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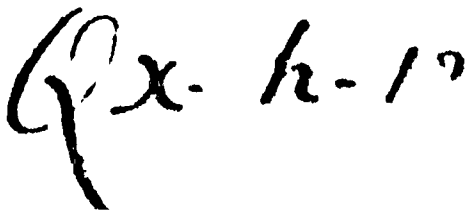

SKETCHES

IN

ITALY AND GREECE.

[*Some of these Essays are reprinted from the "Cornhill Magazine" and the "Fortnightly Review."*]

SKETCHES

IN

ITALY AND GREECE.

BY

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS,

AUTHOR OF "AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF DANTE," AND "STUDIES OF THE GREEK POETS."

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To

J. C. S.

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SKETCHES

IN

ITALY AND GREECE.

THE CORNICE.

IT was a dull afternoon in February when we left Nice, and drove across the mountains to Mentone. Over hill and sea hung a thick mist. Turbia's Roman tower stood up in cheerless solitude, wreathed round with driving vapour, and the rocky nest of Esa seemed suspended in a chaos between sea and sky. Sometimes the fog broke and showed us Villafranca, lying green and flat in the deep blue below: sometimes a distant view of higher peaks swam into sight from the shifting cloud. But the whole scene was desolate. Was it for this that we had left our English home, and travelled from London day and night? At length we reached the edge of the cloud, and jingled down by Roccabruna and the olive-groves, till one by one Mentone's villas came in sight, and at last we found ourselves at the inn door. That night, and all next day and the next night, we heard the hoarse sea beat and thunder on the beach. The rain and wind kept driving from the south, but we consoled ourselves with thinking that the orange-trees and every kind of flower

were drinking in the moisture and waiting to rejoice in sunlight which would come.

It was a Sunday morning when we woke and found that the rain had gone, the sun was shining brightly on the sea, and a clear north wind was blowing cloud and mist away. Out upon the hills we went, not caring much what path we took; for everything was beautiful, and hill and vale were full of garden walks. Through lemon-groves,—pale, golden, tender trees,—and olives, stretching their grey boughs against the lonely cottage tiles, we climbed, until we reached the pines and heath above. Then I knew the meaning of Theocritus for the first time. We found a well, broad, deep, and clear, with green herbs growing at the bottom, a runlet flowing from it down the rocky steps, maidenhair, black adiantum, and blue violets, hanging from the brink and mirrored in the water. This was just the well in *Hylas*. Theocritus has been badly treated. They call him a court poet, dead to Nature, artificial in his pictures. Yet I recognised this fountain by his verse, just as if he had showed me the very spot. Violets grow everywhere, of every shade, from black to lilac. Their stalks are long, and the flowers "nod" upon them, so that I see how the Greeks could make them into chaplets—how Lycidas wore his crown of white violets* lying by the fireside, elbow-deep in withered asphodel, watching the chestnuts in the fire, and softly drinking deep healths to Ageanax far off upon the waves. It is impossible to go wrong in these valleys. They are cultivated to the height of about five hundred feet above the sea, in ter-

* This begs the question whether λευκόιον does not properly mean snowflake, or some such flower. Violets in Greece, however, were often used for crowns: *ιοστέφανος* is the epithet of Homer for Aphrodite, and of Aristophanes for Athens.

races laboriously built up with walls, earthed and manured, and irrigated by means of tanks and aqueducts. Above this level, where the virgin soil has not been yet reclaimed, or where the winds of winter bring down freezing currents from the mountains through a gap or gully of the lower hills, a tangled growth of heaths and arbutus, and pines, and rosemaries, and myrtles, continue the vegetation, till it finally ends in bare grey rocks and peaks some thousand feet in height. Far above all signs of cultivation on these arid peaks, you still may see villages and ruined castles, built centuries ago for a protection from the Moorish pirates. To these mountain fastnesses the people of the coast retreated when they descried the sails of their foes on the horizon. In Mentone, at the present day, there are old men who in their youth are said to have been taken captive by the Moors, and many Arabic words have found their way into the patois of the people.

There is something strangely fascinating in the sight of these ruins on the burning rocks, with their black sentinel cypresses, immensely tall and far away. Long years and rain and sunlight have made these castellated eyries one with their native stone. It is hard to trace in their foundations where Nature's workmanship ends and where man's begins. What strange sights the mountain villagers must see! The vast blue plain of the unfurrowed deep, the fairy range of Corsica hung midway between the sea and sky at dawn or sunset, the stars so close above their heads, the deep dew-sprinkled valleys, the green pines! On penetrating into one of these hill-fortresses, you find that it is a whole village, with a church and castle and piazza, some few feet square, huddled together on a narrow platform. We met one day three magnates of Gorbio taking a morning stroll

backwards and forwards, up and down their tiny square. Vehemently gesticulating, loudly chattering, they talked as if they had not seen each other for ten years, and were but just unloading their budgets of accumulated news. Yet these three men probably had lived, eaten, drunk, and talked together from the cradle to that hour: so true it is that use and custom quicken all our powers, especially of gossiping and scandal-mongering. St Agnese is the highest and most notable of all these villages. The cold and heat upon its absolutely barren rock must be alike intolerable. In appearance it is not unlike the Etruscan towns of Central Italy; but there is something, of course, far more imposing in the immense antiquity and the historical associations of a Narni, a Fiesole, a Chiusi, or an Orvieto. Sea life and rusticity strike a different note from that of those Apennine-girdled seats of dead civilisation, in which nations, arts, and religions have gone by and left but few traces,—some wrecks of giant walls, some excavated tombs, some shrines, where monks still sing and pray above the relics of the founders of once world-shaking, now almost forgotten, orders. Here at Mentone there is none of this; the idyllic is the true note, and Theocritus is still alive.

We do not often scale these altitudes, but keep along the terraced glades by the side of olive-shaded streams. The violets, instead of peeping shyly from hedgerows, fall in ripples and cascades over mossy walls among maidenhair and spleenworts. They are very sweet, and the sound of trickling water seems to mingle with their fragrance in a most delicious harmony. Sound, smell, and hue make up one chord, the sense of which is pure and perfect peace. The country-people are kind, letting us pass everywhere, so that we make our way along their aqueducts and through their gardens, under laden lemon-

boughs, the pale fruit dangling at our ears, and swinging showers of scented dew upon us as we pass. Far better, however, than lemon or orange trees, are the olives. Some of these are immensely old, numbering, it is said, five centuries, so that Petrarch may almost have rested beneath their shade on his way to Avignon. These veterans are cavernous with age: gnarled, split, and twisted trunks, throwing out arms that break into a hundred branches; every branch distinct, and feathered with innumerable sparks and spikelets of white, wavy, greenish light. These are the leaves, and the stems are grey with lichens. The sky and sea—two blues, one full of sunlight and the other purple—set these fountains of perennial brightness like gems in lapis lazuli. At a distance the same olives look hoary and soft—a veil of woven light or luminous haze. When the wind blows their branches all one way, they ripple like a sea of silver. But underneath their covert, in the shade, grey periwinkles wind among the snowy drift of allium. The narcissus sends its arrowy fragrance through the air, while, far and wide, red anemones burn like fire, with interchange of blue and lilac buds, white arums, orchises, and pink gladiolus. Wandering there, and seeing the pale flowers, stars white and pink and odorous, we dream of Olivet, or the grave Garden of the Agony, and the trees seem always whispering of sacred things. How people can blaspheme against the olives, and call them imitations of the willow, or complain that they are shabby shrubs, I do not know.*

This shore would stand for Shelley's "Island of

* Olive-trees must be studied at Mentone or San Remo, in Corfu, at Tivoli, on the coast between Syracuse and Catania, or on the lowlands of Apulia. The stunted but productive trees of the Rhone valley, for example, are no real measure of the beauty they can exhibit.

Epipsychidion," or the golden age which Empedocles describes. when the mild nations worshipped Aphrodite with incense and the images of beasts and yellow honey, and no blood was spilt upon her altars—when "the trees flourished with perennial leaves and fruit, and ample crops adorned their boughs through all the year." This even now is literally true of the lemon-groves, which do not cease to flower and ripen. Everything fits in to complete the reproduction of Greek pastoral life. The goats eat cytisus and myrtle on the shore: a whole flock gathered round me as I sat beneath a tuft of golden green euphorbia the other day, and nibbled bread from my hands. The frog still croaks by tank and fountain, "whom the Muses have ordained to sing for aye," in spite of Bion's death. The narcissus, anemone, and hyacinth still tell their tales of love and death. Hesper still gazes on the shepherd from the mountain-head. The slender cypresses still vibrate, the pines murmur. Pan sleeps in noontide heat, and goatherds and wayfaring men lie down to slumber by the roadside, under-olive-boughs in which cicadas sing. The little villages high up are just as white, the mountains just as grey and shadowy when evening falls. Nothing is changed—except ourselves. I expect to find a statue of Priapus or pastoral Pan, hung with wreaths of flowers—the meal cake, honey, and spilt wine upon his altar, and young boys and maidens dancing round. Surely, in some far-off glade, by the side of lemon grove or garden, near the village, there must be still a pagan remnant of glad Nature-worship. Surely I shall chance upon some Thyrsis piping in the pine-tree shade, or Daphne flying from the arms of Phœbus. So I dream until I come upon the Calvary set on a solitary hillock, with its prayer-steps lending a wide prospect

across the olives and the orange-trees, and the broad valleys, to immeasurable skies and purple seas. There is the iron cross, the wounded heart, the spear, the reed, the nails, the crown of thorns, the cup of sacrificial blood, the title, with its superscription royal and divine. The other day we crossed a brook and entered a lemon-field, rich with blossoms and carpeted with red anemones. Everything basked in sunlight and glittered with exceeding brilliancy of hue. A tiny white chapel stood in a corner of the enclosure. Two iron-grated windows let me see inside: it was a bare place, containing nothing but a wooden praying-desk, black and worm-eaten, an altar with its candles and no flowers, and above the altar a square picture brown with age. On the floor were scattered several pence, and in a vase above the holy-water vessel stood some withered hyacinths. As my sight became accustomed to the gloom, I could see from the darkness of the picture a pale Christ nailed to the cross with agonising upward eyes and ashy aureole above the bleeding thorns. Thus I stepped suddenly away from the outward pomp and bravery of nature to the inward aspirations, agonies, and martyrdoms of man—from Greek legends of the past to the real Christian present—and I remembered that an illimitable prospect has been opened to the world, that in spite of ourselves we must turn our eyes heavenward, inward, to the infinite unseen beyond us and within our souls. Nothing can take us back to Phœbus or to Pan. Nothing can again identify us with the simple natural earth. "*Une immense espérance a traversé la terre*," and these chapels, with their deep significances, lurk in the fair landscape like the cares of real life among our dreams of art, or like a fear of death and the hereafter in the midst of opera music. It is a

strange contrast. The worship of men in those old times was symbolised by dances in the evening, banquets, libations, and mirth-making. "Euphrosyne" was alike the goddess of the righteous mind and of the merry heart. Old withered women telling their rosaries at dusk; belated shepherds crossing themselves beneath the stars when they pass the chapel; maidens weighed down with Margaret's anguish of unhappy love; youths vowing their life to contemplation in secluded cloisters, —these are the human forms which gather round such chapels; and the motto of the worshippers consists in this, "Do often violence to thy desire." In the Tyrol we have seen whole villages praying together at daybreak before their day's work, singing their *Miserere* and their *Gloria* and their *Dies Iræ* to the sound of crashing organs and jangling bells; appealing in the midst of Nature's splendour to the Spirit which is above Nature, which dwells in darkness rather than light, and loves the yearnings and contentions of our soul more than its summer gladness and peace. Even the olives here tell more to us of Olivet and the Garden than of the oil-press and the wrestling-ground. The lilies carry us to the Sermon on the Mount, and teach humility, instead of summoning up some legend of a god's love for a mortal. The hillside tanks and running streams, and water-brooks swollen by sudden rain, speak of Palestine. We call the white flowers stars of Bethlehem. The large sceptre-reed; the fig-tree, lingering in barrenness when other trees are full of fruit; the locust-beans of the Caruba:—for one suggestion of Greek idylls there is yet another, of far deeper, dearer power.

But who can resist the influence of Greek ideas at the Cap St Martin? Down to the verge of the sea stretch the tall, twisted stems of Levant pines, and on the caverned

limestone breaks the deep blue water. Dazzling as marble are these rocks, pointed and honeycombed with constant dashing of the restless sea, tufted with corallines and grey and purple sea-weeds in the little pools, but hard and dry and rough above tide level. Nor does the sea always lap them quietly; for the last few days it has come tumbling in, roaring and raging on the beach with huge waves crystalline in their transparency, and maned with fleecy spray. Such were the rocks and such the swell of breakers when Ulysses grasped the shore after his long swim. Samphire, very salt and fragrant, grows in the rocky honeycomb; then lentisk and beach-loving myrtle, both exceeding green and bushy; then rosemary and euphorbia above the reach of spray. Fishermen, with their long reeds, sit lazily perched upon black rocks above blue waves, sunning themselves as much as seeking sport. One distant tip of snow, seen far away behind the hills, reminds us of an alien, unremembered winter. While dreaming there, this fancy came into my head: Polyphemus was born yonder in the Gorbio Valley. There he fed his sheep and goats, and on the hills found scanty pasture for his kine. He and his mother lived in the white house by the cypress near the stream where tulips grow. Young Galatea, nursed in the caverns of these rocks, white as the foam, and shy as the sea fishes, came one morning up the valley to pick mountain-hyacinths, and little Polyphemus led the way. He knew where violets and sweet narcissus grew, as well as Galatea where pink coralline and spreading sea-flowers with their waving arms. But Galatea, having filled her lap with blue-bells, quite forgot the leaping kids, and piping Cyclops, and cool summer caves, and yellow honey, and black ivy, and sweet vine, and water cold as Alpine snow. Down the

swift streamlet she danced laughingly, and made herself once more bitter with the sea. But Polyphemus remained,—hungry, sad, gazing on the barren sea, and piping to the mockery of its waves.

Filled with these Greek fancies, it is strange to come upon a little sandstone dell furrowed by trickling streams and overgrown with English primroses; or to enter the village of Roccabruna, with its mediæval castle and the motto on its walls, *Tempora labuntur tacitisque senescimus annis.* A true motto for the town, where the butcher comes but once a week, and where men and boys, and dogs, and palms, and lemon-trees grow up and flourish and decay in the same hollow of the sunny mountain-side. Into the hard conglomerate of the hill the town is built; house walls and precipices morticed into one another, dovetailed by the art of years gone by, and riveted by age. The same plants grow from both alike—spurge, cistus, rue, and henbane, constant to the desolation of abandoned dwellings. From the castle you look down on roofs, brown tiles and chimney-pots, set one above the other like a big card-castle. Each house has its foot on a neighbour's neck, and its shoulder set against the native stone. The streets meander in and out, and up and down, overarched and balconied, but very clean. They swarm with children, healthy, happy little monkeys, who grow fat on salt fish and yellow polenta, with oil and sun *ad libitum.* At night from Roccabruna you may see the flaring gas-lamps of the gaming-house at Monaco, that Armida's garden of the nineteenth century. It is the sunniest and most sheltered spot of all the coast. Long ago Lucan said of Monaco, "*Non Corus in illum jus habet aut Zephyrus;*" winter never comes to nip its tangled cactuses, and aloes, and geraniums. The air swoons with the scent of lemon-groves;

tall palm-trees wave their graceful branches by the shore; music of the softest and the loudest swells from the palace; cool corridors and sunny seats stand ready for the noontide heat or evening calm; without, are olive-gardens, green and fresh and full of flowers. But the witch herself holds her high court and never-ending festival of sin in the painted banquet-halls and among the green tables.

Let us leave this scene and turn with the country-folk of Roccabruna to St Michael's Church at Mentone. High above the sea it stands, and from its open doors you look across the mountains with their olive-trees. Inside the church is a seething mass of country-folk and townspeople, mostly women, and these almost all old, but picturesque beyond description; kerchiefs of every colour, wrinkles of every shape and depth, skins of every tone of brown and yellow, voices of every gruffness, shrillness, strength, and weakness. Wherever an empty corner can be found, it is soon filled by tottering babies and mischievous children. The country-women come with their large dangling earrings of thin gold, wearing pink tulips or lemon-buds in their black hair. A low buzz of gossiping and mutual recognition keeps the air alive. The whole service seems a holiday—a general enjoyment of gala dresses and friendly greetings, very different from the silence, immobility, and *noli me tangere* aspect of an English congregation. Over all drones, rattles, snores, and shrieks the organ; wailing, querulous, asthmatic, incomplete, its everlasting nasal chant—always beginning, never ending, through a range of two or three notes ground into one monotony. The voices of the congregation rise and sink above it. These southern people, like the Arabs, the Apulians, and the Spaniards, seem to find their music in a hurdy-gurdy

swell of sound. The other day we met a little girl, walking, and spinning, and singing all the while, whose song was just another version of this chant. It has a discontented plaintive wail, as if it came from some vast age, and were a cousin of primeval winds.

At first sight, by the side of Mentone, San Remo is sadly prosaic. The valleys seem to sprawl, and the universal olives are monotonously grey upon their thick clay soil. Yet the wealth of flowers in the fat earth is wonderful. One might fancy oneself in a weedy farm flower-bed invaded by stray oats and beans and cabbages and garlic from the kitchen-garden. The country does not suggest a single Greek idea. It has no form or outline—no barren peaks, no spare and difficult vegetation. The beauty is rich but tame—valleys green with oats and corn, blossoming cherry-trees, and sweet bean-fields, figs coming into leaf, and arrowy bay-trees by the side of sparkling streams: here and there a broken aqueduct or rainbow bridge hung with maiden-hair and briar and clematis and sarsaparilla.

In the cathedral church of San Siro on Good Friday they hang the columns and the windows with black; they cover the pictures and deface the altar; above the high altar they raise a crucifix, and below they place a catafalque with the effigy of the dead Christ. To this sad symbol they address their prayers and incense, chant their "litanies and lurries," and clash the rattles, which commemorate their rage against the traitor Judas. So far have we already passed away from the Greek feeling of Mentone. As I listened to the hideous din, I could not but remember the Theocritean burial of Adonis. Two funeral beds prepared: two feasts recurring in the spring-time of the year. What a difference beneath this superficial similarity! *καλὸς νέκυς οἷα*

καθεύδων—attritus ægrâ macie. But the fast of Good Friday is followed by the festival of Easter. That, after all, is the chief difference.

After leaving the cathedral we saw a pretty picture in a dull old street of San Remo—three children leaning from a window, blowing bubbles. The bubbles floated down the street, of every colour, round and trembling, like the dreams of life which children dream. The town is certainly most picturesque. It resembles a huge glacier of houses poured over a wedge of rock, running down the sides and along the ridge, and spreading itself into a fan between two torrents on the shore below. House over house, with balcony and staircase, convent turret and church tower, palm-trees and olives, roof gardens and clinging creepers—this white cataract of buildings streams downward from the lazar-house, and sanctuary, and sandstone quarries on the hill. It is a mass of streets placed close above each other, and linked together with arms and arches of solid masonry, as a protection from the earthquakes which are frequent at San Remo. The walls are tall, and form a labyrinth of gloomy passages and treacherous blind alleys, where the Moors of old might meet with a ferocious welcome. Indeed, San Remo is a fortress as well as a dwelling-place. Over its gateways may still be traced the pipes for molten lead, and on its walls the eyeloops for arrows, with brackets for the feet of archers. Masses of building have been shaken down by earthquakes. The ruins of what once were houses gape with blackened chimneys and dark forlorn cellars; mazes of fungus and unhealthy weeds among the still secure habitations. Hardly a ray of light penetrates the streets; one learns the meaning of the Italian word *uggia* from their cold and gloom.

During the day they are deserted by every one but babies and witchlike old women—some gossiping, some sitting vacant at the house door, some spinning or weaving, or minding little children—ugly and ancient as are their own homes, yet clean as are the streets. The younger population goes afield; the men on mules laden for the hills, the women burdened like mules with heavy and disgusting loads. It is not a handsome race, but tall, well-grown, and strong. But to the streets again. The shops in the upper town are few, chiefly wine-booths and stalls for the sale of salt fish, eggs, and bread, or cobblers' and tinkers' ware. Notwithstanding the darkness of their dwellings, the people have a love of flowers; azaleas lean from their windows, and vines, carefully protected by a sheath of brickwork, climb the six stories, to blossom out into a pergola upon the roof. Look at that mass of greenery and colours, dimly seen from beneath, with a yellow cat sunning herself upon the parapet! To reach such a garden and such sunlight who would not mount six stories and thread a labyrinth of passages? I should prefer a room upon the east side of the town, looking southward to the Molo and the sea, with a sound of water beneath, and a palm soaring up to fan my window with his feathery leaves.

The shrines are little spots of brightness in the gloomy streets. Madonna with a sword; Christ holding his pierced and bleeding heart; l'Eterno Padre pointing to the dead Son stretched upon his knee; some souls in torment; St Roch reminding us of old plagues by the spot upon his thigh;—these are the symbols of the shrines. Before them stand rows of pots filled with gillyflowers, placed there by pious, simple, praying hands—by maidens come to tell their sorrows

to our Lady rich in sorrow, by old women bent and shrivelled, in hopes of paradise or gratitude for happy days, when Madonna kept Cecchino faithful to his home, or saved the baby from the fever.

Lower down between the sea and the hill is the municipal, aristocratic, ecclesiastical quarter of San Remo. There stands the Palace Borea—a truly princely pile, built in the last Renaissance style of splendour, with sea-nymphs and dolphins, and satyric heads, half lips, half leafage, round about its doors and windows. Once it formed the dwelling of a feudal family, but now it is a roomy anthill of a hundred houses, shops, and offices, the Boreas of to-day retaining but a portion of one flat, and making profit of the rest. There, too, are the barracks and the syndic's hall; the Jesuits' school, crowded with boys and girls; the shops for clothes, confectionery, and trinkets; the piazza, with its fountain and tasselled planes, and flowery chestnut-trees, a mass of greenery. Under these trees the idlers lounge, boys play at leap-frog, men at bowls. Women in San Remo work all day, but men and boys play for the most part at bowls or toss-penny or leap-frog or morra. San Siro, the cathedral, stands at one end of the square. Do not go inside; it has a sickly smell of immemorial incense and garlic, undefinable and horrible. Far better looks San Siro from the parapet above the torrent. There you see its irregular half-Gothic outline across a tangle of lemon-trees and olives. The stream rushes by through high walls, covered with creepers, spanned by ferny bridges, feathered by one or two old tufty palms. And over all rises the ancient turret of San Siro, like a Spanish giralda, a minaret of pinnacles and pyramids and dome bubbles, with windows showing heavy bells, old clocks, and sun-

dials painted on the walls, and a cupola of green and yellow tiles like serpent-scales, to crown the whole. The sea lies beyond, and the house-roofs break it with grey horizontal lines. Then there are convents, legions of them, large white edifices, Jesuitical apparently for the most part, clanging importunate bells, leaning rose-blossoms and cypress-boughs over their jealous walls.

Lastly, there is the port—the mole running out into the sea, the quay planted with plane-trees, and the fishing-boats—by which San Remo is connected with the naval glory of the past—with the Riviera that gave birth to Columbus—with the Liguria that the Dorias ruled—with the great name of Genoa. The port is empty enough now ; but from the pier you look back on San Remo and its circling hills, a jewelled town set in illimitable olive greyness. The quay seems also to be the cattle-market. There the small buff cows of North Italy repose after their long voyage or march, kneeling on the sandy ground or rubbing their sides against the wooden cross awry with age and shorn of all its symbols. Lambs frisk among the boats; impudent kids nibble the drooping ears of patient mules. Hinds in white jackets and knee-breeches made of skins, lead shaggy rams and fiercely bearded goats, ready to butt at every barking dog, and always seeking opportunities of flight. Farmers and parish priests in black petticoats feel the cattle and dispute about the price, or whet their bargains with a draught of wine. Meanwhile the nets are brought on shore glittering with the fry of sardines, which are cooked like whitebait, with cuttlefish—amorphous objects stretching shiny feelers on the hot dry sand—and prickly purple eggs of the sea-urchin. Women go about their labour through the throng, some carrying stones upon their

heads, or unloading boats and bearing planks of wood in single file, two marching side by side beneath one load of lime, others scarcely visible under a stack of oats, another with her baby in its cradle fast asleep.

San Remo has an elder brother among the hills, which is called San Romolo, after one of the old bishops of Genoa. Who San Remo was is buried in remote antiquity*; but his town has prospered, while of San Romolo nothing remains but a ruined hill-convent among pine-trees. The old convent is worth visiting. Its road carries you into the heart of the sierra which surrounds San Remo, a hill-country something like the Jura, undulating and green to the very top with maritime pines and pinasters. Riding up, you hear all manner of Alpine sounds; brawling streams, tinkling cow-bells, and herdsmen calling to each other on the slopes. Beneath you lies San Remo, scarcely visible; and over it the great sea rises ever so far into the sky, until the white sails hang in air, and cloud and sea-line melt into each other indistinguishably. Spanish chestnuts surround the monastery, with bright blue gentians, hepaticas, forget-me-nots, and primroses about their roots. The house itself is perched on a knoll with ample prospect to the sea and to the mountains, very near to heaven, within a theatre of noble contemplations and soul-stirring thoughts. If Mentone spoke to me of the poetry of Greek pastoral life, this convent speaks of mediæval monasticism—of solitude with God, above, beneath, and all around, of silence and repose from agitating cares, of continuity in prayer, and changelessness of daily life. Some precepts of the *Imitatio* came into my mind: "Be never wholly idle; read or write, pray or meditate, or work with diligence for the common needs." "Praiseworthy is it for the religious

* Remo is believed to be [illegible] B

man to go abroad but seldom, and to seem to shun, and keep his eyes from men." "Sweet is the cell when it is often sought, but if we gad about, it wearies us by its seclusion." Then I thought of the monks so living in this solitude; their cell windows looking across the valley to the sea, through summer and winter, under sun and stars. Then would they read or write, what long melodious hours! or would they pray, what stations on the pine-clad hills! or would they toil, what terraces to build and plant with corn, what flowers to tend, what cows to milk and pasture, what wood to cut, what fir-cones to gather for the winter fire! or should they yearn for silence, silence from their comrades of the solitude, what whispering galleries of God, where never human voice breaks loudly, but winds and streams and lonely birds disturb the awful stillness! In such a hermitage as this, only more wild, lived St Francis of Assisi, among the Apennines.* It was there that he learned the tongues of beasts and birds, and preached them sermons. Stretched for hours motionless on the bare rocks, coloured like them and rough like them in his brown peasant's serge, he prayed and meditated, saw the vision of Christ crucified, and planned his order to regenerate a vicious age. So still he lay, so long, so like a stone, so gentle were his eyes, so kind and low his voice, that the mice nibbled bread-crumbs from his wallet, lizards ran over him, and larks sang to him in the air. There, too, in those long, solitary vigils, the spirit of God came upon him, and the spirit of Nature was even as God's spirit, and he sang: "Laudato sia Dio mio Signore, con tutte le creature, specialmente messer lo frate sole; per suor luna, e per le stelle; per frate vento e per l'aire, e nuvolo, e sereno e ogni tempo."

* Dante, Par. xi. 106.

Half the value of this hymn would be lost were we to forget how it was written, in what solitudes and mountains far from men, or to ticket it with some abstract word like Pantheism. Pantheism it is not; but an acknowledgment of that brotherhood, beneath the love of God, by which the sun and moon and stars, and wind and air and cloud, and clearness and all weather, and all creatures, are bound together with the soul of man.

Few, of course, were like St Francis. Probably no monk of San Romolo was inspired with his enthusiasm for humanity, or had his revelation of the Divine Spirit inherent in the world. Still fewer can have felt the æsthetic charm of Nature but most vaguely. It was as much as they could boast, if they kept steadily to the rule of their order, and attended to the concerns each of his own soul. A terrible selfishness, if rightly considered; but one which accorded with the delusion that this world is a cave of care, the other world a place of torture or undying bliss, death the prime object of our meditation, and lifelong abandonment of our fellow-men the highest mode of existence. Why, then, should monks, so persuaded of the riddle of the earth, have placed themselves in scenes so beautiful? Why rose the Camaldolis and Chartreuses over Europe? white convents on the brows of lofty hills, among the rustling boughs of Vallombrosas, in the grassy meadows of Engelbergs,—always the eyries of Nature's lovers, men smitten with the loveliness of earth? There is surely some meaning in these poetic stations.

Here is a sentence of the *Imitatio* which throws some light upon the hymn of St Francis and the sites of Benedictine monasteries, by explaining the value of natural beauty for monks who spent their life in studying death: "If thy heart were right, then would every

creature be to thee a mirror of life, and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so small and vile that "does not show forth the goodness of God." With this sentence bound about their foreheads, walked Fra Angelico and St Francis. To men like them the mountain valleys and the skies, and all that they contained, were full of deep significance. Though they reasoned "*de conditione humanæ miseriæ*," and "*de contemptu mundi*," yet the whole world was a pageant of God's glory, a testimony to His goodness. Their chastened senses, pure hearts, and simple wills, were as wings by which they soared above the things of earth, and sent the music of their souls aloft with every other creature in the symphony of praise. To them, as to Blake, the sun was no mere blazing disc or ball, but "an innumerable company of the heavenly host singing, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.'" To them the winds were brothers, and the streams were sisters—brethren in common dependence upon God their Father, brethren in common consecration to his service, brethren by blood, brethren by vows of holiness. Unquestioning faith rendered this world no puzzle; they overlooked the things of sense because the spiritual things were ever present, and as clear as day. Yet did they not forget that spiritual things are symbolised by things of sense; and so the smallest herb of grass was vital to their tranquil contemplations. We who have lost sight of the invisible world, who set our affections more on things of earth, fancy that because these monks despised the world, and did not write about its landscapes, therefore they were dead to its beauty. This is mere vanity: the mountains, stars, seas, fields, and living things were only swallowed up in the one thought of God, and made subordinate to the

awfulness of human destinies. We to whom hills are hills, and seas are seas, and stars are ponderable quantities, speak, write, and reason of them as of objects interesting in themselves. The monks were less concerned about such things, because they only found in them the vestibules and symbols of a hidden mystery.

The contrast between the Greek and mediæval modes of regarding Nature is not a little remarkable. Both Greeks and monks, judged by nineteenth-century standards, were unobservant of natural beauties. They make but brief and general remarks upon landscapes and the like. The *ποντίων τε κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* is very rare. But the Greeks stopped at the threshold of Nature; the forces they found there, the gods, were inherent in Nature, and distinct. They did not, like the monks, place one spiritual power, omnipotent and omnipresent, above all, and see in Nature lessons of divine government. Since Paley somewhat overstrained the latter point of view, we have returned vaguely to Greek fancies. Perhaps we talk so much about scenery because it is *scenery* to us, and the life has gone out of it.

I cannot leave the Cornice without one word about a place which lies between Mentone and San Remo. Bordighera has a beauty which is quite distinct from both. Palms are its chief characteristic. They lean against the garden walls, and feather the wells outside the town, where women come with brazen pitchers to draw water. In some of the marshy tangles of the plain, they spring from a thick undergrowth of spiky leaves, and rear their tall aerial arms against the deep blue background of the sea or darker purple of the distant hills. White pigeons fly about among their

branches, and the air is loud with cooings and with rustlings, and the hoarser croaking of innumerable frogs. Then, in the olive-groves that stretch along the level shore, are labyrinths of rare and curious plants painted tulips and white periwinkles, flinging their light of blossoms and dark glossy leaves down the swift channels of the brawling streams. On each side of the rivulets they grow, like sister cataracts of flowers instead of spray. At night fresh stars come out along the coast, beneath the stars of heaven; for you can see the lamps of Ventimiglia and Mentone and Monaco, and, far away, the lighthouses upon the promontories of Antibes and the Estrelles. At dawn, a vision of Corsica grows from the sea. The island lies eighty miles away, but one can trace the dark strip of irregular peaks glowing amid the gold and purple of the rising sun. If the air is clear and bright, the snows and overvaulting clouds which crown its mountains shine all day, and glitter like an apparition in the bright blue sky. "Phantom fair," half raised above the sea, it stands, as unreal and transparent as the moon when seen in April sunlight, yet not to be confounded with the shape of any cloud. If Mentone speaks of Greek legends, and San Romolo restores the monastic past, we feel ourselves at Bordighera transported to the East; and lying under its tall palms, can fancy ourselves at Tyre or Daphne, or in the gardens of a Moslem prince.

NOTE.—Dec. 1873. My old impressions are renewed and confirmed by a third visit, after seven years, to this coast. For purely idyllic loveliness, the Cornice is surpassed by nothing in the South. A very few spots in Sicily, the road between Castellammare and Amalfi, and the island of Corfu, are its only rivals in this style of scenery. From Cannes to Sestri is one continuous line of exquisitely modulated landscape beauty, which can only be fully appreciated by travellers in carriage or on foot.

AJACCIO.

It generally happens that visitors to Ajaccio pass over from the Cornice coast, leaving Nice at night, and waking about sunrise to find themselves beneath the frowning mountains of Corsica. The difference between the scenery of the island and the shores which they have left is very striking. Instead of the rocky mountains of the Cornice, intolerably dry and barren at their summits, but covered at their base with villages and ancient towns and olive-fields, Corsica presents a scene of solitary and peculiar grandeur. The highest mountain-tops are covered with snow, and beneath the snow-level to the sea they are as green as Irish or as English hills, but nearly uninhabited and uncultivated. Valleys of almost Alpine verdure are succeeded by tracts of chestnut wood and scattered pines, or deep and flowery brushwood—the "maquis" of Corsica, which yields shelter to its traditional outlaws and bandits. Yet upon these hillsides there are hardly any signs of life; the whole country seems abandoned to primeval wildness and the majesty of desolation. Nothing can possibly be more unlike the smiling Riviera, every square mile of which is cultivated like a garden, and every valley and bay dotted over with white villages. After steaming for a few hours along this savage coast, the rocks which guard the entrance to the bay of Ajaccio, murderous-looking teeth and needles ominously christened Sanguinari, are passed, and we enter the splendid

land-locked harbour, on the northern shore of which Ajaccio is built. About three centuries ago the town, which used to occupy the extreme or eastern end of the bay, was removed to a more healthy point upon the northern coast, so that Ajaccio is quite a modern city. Visitors who expect to find in it the picturesqueness of Genoa or San Remo, or even of Mentone, will be sadly disappointed. It is simply a healthy, well-appointed town of recent date, the chief merits of which are that it has wide streets, and is free, externally at least, from the filth and rubbish of most southern seaports.

But if Ajaccio itself is not picturesque, the scenery which it commands, and in the heart of which it lies, is of the most magnificent. The bay of Ajaccio resembles a vast Italian lake—a Lago Maggiore, with greater space between the mountains and the shore. From the snow-peaks of the interior, huge granite crystals clothed in white, to the southern extremity of the bay, peak succeeds peak and ridge rises behind ridge in a line of wonderful variety and beauty. The atmospheric changes of light and shadow, cloud and colour, on this upland country, are as subtle and as various as those which lend their beauty to the scenery of the lakes, while the sea below is blue and rarely troubled. One could never get tired with looking at this view. Morning and evening add new charms to its sublimity and beauty. In the early morning Monte d'Oro sparkles like a Monte Rosa with its fresh snow, and the whole inferior range puts on the crystal blueness of dawn among the Alps. In the evening violet and purple tints and the golden glow of Italian sunset lend a different lustre to the fairyland. In fact, the beauties of Switzerland and Italy are curiously blended in this landscape.

In soil and vegetation the country round Ajaccio differs much from the Cornice. There are very few olive-trees, nor is the cultivated ground backed up so immediately by stony mountains; but between the sea-shore and the hills there is plenty of space for pasture-land, and orchards of apricot and peach trees, and orange-gardens. This undulating champaign, green with meadows and watered with clear streams, is very refreshing to the eyes of Northern people, who may have wearied of the bareness and greyness of Nice or Mentone. It is traversed by excellent roads, recently constructed on a plan of the French Government, which intersect the country in all directions, and offer an infinite variety of rides or drives to visitors. The broken granite of which these roads are made is very pleasant for riding over. Most of the hills through which they strike after starting from Ajaccio are clothed with a thick brushwood of box, ilex, lentisk, arbutus, and laurustinus, which stretches down irregularly into vineyards, olive-gardens, and meadows. It is, indeed, the native growth of the island; for wherever a piece of ground is left untilled, the macchi grow up, and the scent of their multitudinous aromatic blossoms is so strong that it may be smelt miles out at sea. Napoleon, at St Helena, referred to this fragrance when he said that he should know Corsica blindfold by the smell of its soil. Occasional woods of holm oak make darker patches on the landscape, and a few pines fringe the side of enclosure walls or towers. The prickly pear runs riot in and out among the hedges and upon the walls, diversifying the colours of the landscape with its strange grey-green masses and unwieldy fans. In spring, when peach and almond trees are in blossom, and when the roadside is starred with asphodels, this

country is most beautiful in its gladness. The macchi blaze with cistus flowers of red and silver. Golden broom mixes with the dark purple of the great French lavender, and over the whole mass of blossom wave plumes of Mediterranean heath and sweet-scented yellow coronilla. Under the stems of the ilex peep cyclamens, pink and sweet; the hedgerows are a tangle of vetches, convolvuluses, lupines, orchises, and alliums, with here and there a purple iris. It would be difficult to describe all the rare and lovely plants which are found here in a profusion that surpasses even the flower-gardens of the Cornice, and reminds one of the most favoured Alpine valleys in their early spring.

Since the French occupied Corsica they have done much for the island by improving its harbours and making good roads, and endeavouring to mitigate the ferocity of the people. But they have many things to contend against, and Corsica is still behind the other provinces of France. The people are idle, haughty, umbrageous, fiery, quarrelsome, fond of gipsy life, and retentive through generations of old feuds and prejudices to an almost inconceivable extent. Then the nature of the country itself offers serious obstacles to its proper colonisation and cultivation. The savage state of the island and its internal feuds have disposed the Corsicans to quit the seaboard for their mountain villages and fortresses, so that the great plains at the foot of the hills are unwholesome for want of tillage and drainage. Again, the mountains themselves have in many parts been stripped of their forests and converted into mere wildernesses of macchi stretching up and down their slopes for miles and miles of useless desolation. Another impediment to proper cultivation is found in the old habit of what is called free pasturage.

The highland shepherds are allowed by the national custom to drive down their flocks and herds to the lowlands during the winter, so that fences are broken, young crops are browsed over and trampled down, and agriculture becomes a mere impossibility. The last and chief difficulty against which the French have had to contend, and up to this time with apparent success, is brigandage. The Corsican system of brigandage is so very different from that of the Italians, Sicilians, and Greeks, that a word may be said about its peculiar character. In the first place, it has nothing at all to do with robbery and thieving. The Corsican bandit took to a free life among the macchi, not for the sake of supporting himself by lawless depredation, but because he had put himself under a legal and social ban by murdering some one in obedience to the strict code of honour of his country. His victim may have been the hereditary foe of his house for generations, or else the newly made enemy of yesterday. But in either case, if he had killed him fairly, after a due notification of his intention to do so, he was held to have fulfilled a duty rather than to have committed a crime. He then betook himself to the dense tangles of evergreens which I have described, where he lived upon the charity of country-folk and shepherds. In the eyes of those simple people it was a sacred duty to relieve the necessities of the outlaws, and to guard them from the bloodhounds of justice. There was scarcely a respectable family in Corsica who had not one or more of its members thus *alla campagna*, as it was euphemistically styled. The Corsicans themselves have attributed this miserable state of things to two principal causes. The first of these was the ancient bad government of the island: under its Genoese rulers no justice was administered, and private

vengeance for homicide or insult became a necessary consequence among the haughty and warlike families of the mountain villages. Secondly, the Corsicans have been from time immemorial accustomed to wear arms in everyday life. They used to sit at their house doors and pace the streets with musket, pistol, dagger, and cartouch-box on their persons; and on the most trivial occasion of merriment or enthusiasm they would discharge their firearms. This habit gave a bloody termination to many quarrels, which might have ended more peaceably had the parties been unarmed; and so the seeds of *vendetta* were constantly being sown. Statistics published by the French Government present a hideous picture of the state of bloodshed in Corsica even during this century. In one period of thirty years (between 1821 and 1850) there were 4319 murders in the island. Almost every man was watching for his neighbour's life, or seeking how to save his own; and agriculture and commerce were neglected for this grisly game of hide-and-seek. In 1853 the French began to take strong measures, and, under the Prefect Thuillier, they hunted the bandits from the macchi, killing between 200 and 300 of them. At the same time an edict was promulgated against bearing arms. It is forbidden to sell the old Corsican stiletto in the shops, and no one may carry a gun, even for sporting purposes, unless he obtains a special licence. These licences, moreover, are only granted for short and precisely measured periods.

In order to appreciate the stern and gloomy character of the Corsicans it is necessary to leave the smiling gardens of Ajaccio, and to visit some of the more distant mountain villages—Vico, Cavro, Bastelica, or Bocog-

nano, any of which may easily be reached from the capital. Immediately after quitting the seaboard we enter a country austere in its simplicity, solemn without relief, yet dignified by its majesty and by the sense of freedom it inspires. As we approach the mountains, the macchi become taller, feathering man-high above the road, and stretching far away upon the hills. Gigantic masses of granite, shaped like buttresses and bastions, seem to guard the approaches to these hills; while, looking backward over the green plain, the sea lies smiling in a haze of blue among the rocky horns and misty headlands of the coast. There is a stateliness about the abrupt inclination of these granite slopes, rising from their frowning portals by sharp *arêtes* to the snows piled on their summits, which contrasts in a strange way with the softness and beauty of the mingling sea and plain beneath. In no landscape are more various qualities combined; in none are they so harmonised as to produce so strong a sense of majestic freedom and severe power. Suppose that we are on the road to Corte, and have now reached Bocognano, the first considerable village since we left Ajaccio. Bocognano might be chosen as typical of Corsican hill-villages, with its narrow street, and tall tower-like houses of five or six stories high, faced with rough granite, and pierced with the smallest windows and very narrow doorways. These buildings have a mournful and desolate appearance. There is none of the grandeur of antiquity about them; no sculptured arms or castellated turrets, or balconies or spacious staircases, such as are common in the poorest towns of Italy. The signs of warlike occupation which they offer, and their sinister aspect of vigilance, are thoroughly prosaic. They seem to suggest a state of society in which

feud and violence were systematised into routine. There is no relief to the savage austerity of their forbidding aspect; no signs of wealth or household comfort; no trace of art, no liveliness and gracefulness of architecture. Perched upon their coigns of vantage, these villages seem always menacing, as if Saracen pirates, or Genoese marauders, or bandits bent on vengeance, were still for ever on the watch. Forests of immensely old chestnut-trees surround Bocognano on every side, so that you step from the village streets into the shade of woods that seem to have remained untouched for centuries. The country-people support themselves almost entirely upon the fruit of these chestnuts; and there is a large department of Corsica called Castagniccia, from the prevalence of these trees and the sustenance which the inhabitants derive from them. Close by the village brawls a torrent, such as one may see in the Monte Rosa valleys or the Apennines, but very rarely in Switzerland. It is of a pure green colour, absolutely like Indian jade, foaming round the granite boulders, and gliding over smooth slabs of polished stone, and eddying into still, deep pools fringed with fern. Monte d'Oro, one of the largest mountains of Corsica, soars above, and from his snows this purest water, undefiled by glacier mud or the *débris* of avalanches, melts away. Following the stream, we rise through the macchi and the chestnut-woods, which grow more sparely by degrees, until we reach the zone of beeches. Here the scene seems suddenly transferred to the Pyrenees; for the road is carried along abrupt slopes, thickly set with gigantic beech-trees, overgrown with pink and silver lichens. In the early spring their last year's leaves are still crisp with hoar-frost; one morning's journey has brought us from

the summer of Ajaccio to winter on these heights, where no flowers are visible but the pale hellebore and tiny lilac crocuses. Snow-drifts stretch by the roadside, and one by one the pioneers of the vast pine-woods of the interior appear. A great portion of the pine-forest (*Pinus larix*, or Corsican pine, not larch) between Bocognano and Corte had recently been burned by accident when we passed by. Nothing could be more forlorn than the black leafless stems and branches emerging from the snow. Some of these trees were mast-high, and some mere saplings. Corte itself is built among the mountain fastnesses of the interior. The snows and granite cliffs of Monte Rotondo overhang it to the north-west, while two fair valleys lead downward from its eyrie to the eastern coast. The rock on which it stands rises to a sharp point, sloping southward, and commanding the valleys of the Golo and the Tavignano. Remembering that Corte was the old capital of Corsica, and the centre of General Paoli's government, we are led to compare the town with Innsprück, Meran, or Grenoble. In point of scenery and situation it is hardly second to any of these mountain cities; but its poverty and bareness are scarcely less striking than those of Bocognano.

The whole Corsican character, with its stern love of justice, its furious revengefulness and wild passion for freedom, seems to be illustrated by the peculiar elements of grandeur and desolation in this landscape. When we traverse the forest of Vico or the rocky pasture-lands of Niolo, the history of the Corsican national heroes, Giudice della Rocca and Sampiero, becomes intelligible; nor do we fail to understand some of the mysterious attraction which led the more daring spirits of the island

to prefer a free life among the macchi and pine-woods to placid lawful occupations in farms and villages. The lives of the two men whom I have mentioned are so prominent in Corsican history, and are so often still upon the lips of the common people, that it may be well to sketch their outlines in the foreground of the Salvator Rosa landscape just described. Giudice was the governor of Corsica, as lieutenant for the Pisans, at the end of the thirteenth century. At that time the island belonged to the republic of Pisa, but the Genoese were encroaching on them by land and sea, and the whole life of their brave champion was spent in a desperate struggle with the invaders, until at last he died, old, blind, and in prison, at the command of his savage foes. Giudice was the title which the Pisans usually conferred upon their governor, and Della Rocca deserved it by right of his own inexorable love of justice. Indeed justice seems to have been with him a passion, swallowing up all other feelings of his nature. All the stories which are told of him turn upon this point in his character; and though they may not be strictly true, they illustrate the stern virtues for which he was celebrated among the Corsicans, and show what kind of men this harsh and gloomy nation loved to celebrate as heroes. This is not the place either to criticise these legends or to recount them at full length. The most famous and the most characteristic may, however, be briefly told. On one occasion, after a victory over the Genoese, he sent a message that the captives in his hands should be released if their wives and sisters came to sue for them. The Genoese ladies embarked, and arrived in Corsica, and to Giudice's nephew was intrusted the duty of fulfilling his uncle's promise. In the course of exe-

cuting his commission the youth was so smitten with the beauty of one of the women that he dishonoured her. Thereupon Giudice had him at once put to death. Another story shows the Spartan justice of this hero in a less savage light. He was passing by a cowherd's cottage, when he heard some young calves bleating. On inquiring what distressed them, he was told that the calves had not enough milk to drink after the farm people had been served. Then Giudice made it a law that the calves throughout the land should take their fill before the cows were milked.

Sampiero belongs to a later period of Corsican history. After a long course of misgovernment the Genoese rule had become unbearable. There was no pretence of administering justice, and private vengeance had full sway in the island. The sufferings of the nation were so great that the time had come for a new judge or saviour to rise among them. Sampiero was the son of obscure parents who lived at Bastelica. But his abilities very soon declared themselves, and made a way for him in the world. He spent his youth in the armies of the Medici and of the French Francis, gaining great renown as a brave soldier. Bayard became his friend, and Francis made him captain of his Corsican bands. But Sampiero did not forget the wrongs of his native land while thus on foreign service. He resolved, if possible, to undermine the power of Genoa, and spent the whole of his manhood and old age in one long struggle with their great captain, Stephen Doria. Of his stern patriotism and Roman severity of virtue the following story is a terrible illustration. Sampiero, though a man of mean birth, had married an heiress of the noble Corsican house of the Ornani. His wife, Vannina, was a woman

of timid and flexible nature, who, though devoted to her husband, fell into the snares of his enemies. During his absence on an embassy to Algiers the Genoese induced her to leave her home at Marseilles and to seek refuge in their city, persuading her that this step would secure the safety of her child. She was starting on her journey when a friend of Sampiero arrested her, and brought her back to Aix, in Provence. Sampiero, when he heard of these events, hurried to France, and was received by a relative of his, who hinted that he had known of Vannina's projected flight. "E tu hai taciuto?" was Sampiero's only answer, accompanied by a stroke of his poignard that killed the lukewarm cousin. Sampiero now brought his wife from Aix to Marseilles, preserving the most absolute silence on the way, and there, on entering his house, he killed her with his own hand. It is said that he loved Vannina passionately; and when she was dead, he caused her to be buried with magnificence in the church of St Francis. Like Giudice, Sampiero fell at last a prey to treachery. The murder of Vannina had made the Ornani his deadly foes. In order to avenge her blood, they played into the hands of the Genoese, and laid a plot by which the noblest of the Corsicans was brought to death. First, they gained over to their scheme a monk of Bastelica, called Ambrogio, and Sampiero's own squire and shield-bearer, Vittolo. By means of these men, in whom he trusted, he was drawn defenceless and unattended into a deeply-wooded ravine near Cavro, not very far from his birthplace, where the Ornani and their Genoese troops surrounded him. Sampiero fired his pistols in vain, for Vittolo had loaded them with the shot downwards. Then he drew his sword, and began to lay about him, when the same Vittolo, the Judas,

stabbed him from behind, and the old lion fell dead by his friend's hand. Sampiero was sixty-nine when he died, in the year 1567. It is satisfactory to know that the Corsicans have called traitors and foes to their country Vittoli for ever. These two examples of Corsican patriots are enough; we need not add to theirs the history of Paoli—a milder and more humane, but scarcely less heroic leader. Paoli, however, in the hour of Corsica's extremest peril, retired to England, and died in philosophic exile. Neither Giudice nor Sampiero would have acted thus. The more forlorn the hope, the more they struggled.

Among the old Corsican customs which are fast dying out, but which still linger in the remote valleys of Niolo and Vico, is the *vócero*, or funeral chant, improvised by women at funerals over the bodies of the dead. Nothing illustrates the ferocious temper and savage passions of the race better than these *vóceri*, many of which have been written down and preserved. Most of them are songs of vengeance and imprecation, mingled with hyperbolical laments and utterances of extravagant grief, poured forth by wives and sisters at the side of murdered husbands and brothers. The women who sing them seem to have lost all milk of human kindness, and to have exchanged the virtues of their sex for Spartan fortitude and the rage of furies. While we read their turbid lines we are carried in imagination to one of the cheerless houses of Bastelica or Bocognano, overshadowed by its mournful chestnut-tree, on which the blood of the murdered man is yet red. The *gridata*, or wake, is assembled in a dark room. On the wooden board, called *tola*, the corpse lies stretched; and round it are women, veiled in the blue-black mantle of Corsican costume, moaning and rocking

themselves upon their chairs. The *pasto* or *conforto*, food supplied for mourners, stands upon a side-table, and round the room are men with savage eyes and bristling beards, armed to the teeth, keen for vengeance. The dead man's musket and pocket-pistol lie beside him, and his bloody shirt is hung up at his head. Suddenly the silence, hitherto only disturbed by suppressed groans and muttered curses, is broken by a sharp cry. A woman rises: it is the sister of the dead man; she seizes his shirt, and holding it aloft with Mænad gestures and frantic screams, gives rhythmic utterance to her grief and rage. "I was spinning, when I heard a great noise: it was a gunshot, which went into my heart, and seemed a voice that cried, 'Run, thy brother is dying.' I ran into the room above; I took the blow into my breast; I said, 'Now he is dead, there is nothing to give me comfort. Who will undertake thy vengeance? When I show thy shirt, who will vow to let his beard grow till the murderer is slain? Who is there left to do it? A mother near her death? A sister? Of all our race there is only left a woman, without kin, poor, orphan, and a girl. Yet, O my brother! never fear. For thy vengeance thy sister is enough!

Ma per fà la to bindetta,
Sta siguru, basta anch ella!

Give me the pistol; I will shoulder the gun; I will away to the hills. My brother, heart of thy sister, thou shalt be avenged!'" A *vócero* declaimed upon the bier of Giammatteo and Pasquale, two cousins, by the sister of the former, is still fiercer and more energetic in its malediction. This Erinnys of revenge prays Christ and all the saints to extirpate the

murderer's whole race, to shrivel it up till it passes from the earth. Then, with a sudden and vehement transition to the pathos of her own sorrow, she exclaims :—

Halla mai bista nissunu
Tumbà l'omi pe li canti?

It appears from these words that Giammatteo's enemies had killed him because they were jealous of his skill in singing. Shortly after, she curses the curate of the village, a kinsman of the murderer, for refusing to toll the funeral bells; and at last, all other threads of rage and sorrow being turned and knotted into one, she gives loose to her raging thirst for blood: "If only I had a son, to train like a sleuth-hound, that he might track the murderer! Oh, if I had a son! Oh, if I had a lad!" Her words seem to choke her, and she swoons, and remains for a short time insensible. When the Bacchante of revenge awakes, it is with milder feelings in her heart: "O brother mine, Matteo! art thou sleeping? Here I will rest with thee and weep till daybreak." It is rare to find in literature so crude and intense an expression of fiery hatred as these untranslatable *vóceri* present. The emotion is so simple and so strong that it becomes sublime by mere force, and affects us with a strange pathos when contrasted with the tender affection conveyed in such terms of endearment as "my dove," "my flower," "my pheasant," "my bright painted orange," addressed to the dead. In the *vóceri* it often happens that there are several interlocutors: one friend questions and another answers; or a kinswoman of the murderer attempts to justify the deed, and is overwhelmed with deadly imprecations. Passionate appeals are made to the corpse: "Arise! Do you not hear the women cry?

Stand up. Show your wounds, and let the fountains of your blood flow! Alas! he is dead; he sleeps; he cannot hear!" Then they turn again to tears and curses, feeling that no help or comfort can come from the clay-cold form. The intensity of grief finds strange language for its utterance. A girl, mourning over her father, cries:—

Mi l'hannu crucifissatu
Cume Ghiesu Cristu in croce.

Once only, in Viale's collection, does any friend of the dead remember mercy. It is an old woman, who points to the crucifix above the bier.

But all the *vóceri* are not so murderous. Several are composed for girls who died unwedded and before their time, by their mothers or companions. The language of these laments is far more tender and ornate. They praise the gentle virtues and beauty of the girl, her piety and helpful household ways. The most affecting of these dirges is that which celebrates the death of Romana, daughter of Dariola Danesi. Here is a pretty picture of the girl: "Among the best and fairest maidens you were like a rose among flowers, like the moon among stars; so far more lovely were you than the loveliest. The youths in your presence were like lighted torches, but full of reverence; you were courteous to all, but with none familiar. In church they gazed at you, but you looked at none of them; and after mass you said, 'Mother, let us go.' Oh! who will console me for your loss? Why did the Lord so much desire you? But now you rest in heaven, all joy and smiles; for the world was not worthy of so fair a face. Oh, how far more beautiful will Paradise be now!" Then follows a piteous picture of the old bereaved

mother, to whom a year will seem a thousand years, who will wander among relatives without affection, neighbours without love; and who, when sickness comes, will have no one to give her a drop of water, or to wipe the sweat from her brow, or to hold her hand in death. Yet all that is left for her is to wait and pray for the end, that she may join again her darling.

But it is time to return to Ajaccio itself. At present the attractions and ornaments of the town consist of a good public library, Cardinal Fesch's large but indifferent collection of pictures, two monuments erected to Napoleon, and Napoleon's house. It will always be the chief pride of Ajaccio that she gave birth to the great emperor. Close to the harbour, in a public square by the sea-beach, stands an equestrian statue of the conqueror surrounded by his four brothers on foot. They are all attired in Roman fashion, and are turned seaward, to the west, as if to symbolise the emigration of this family to subdue Europe. There is something ludicrous and forlorn in the stiffness of the group—something even pathetic, when we think how Napoleon gazed seaward from another island, no longer on horseback, no longer laurel-crowned, an unthroned, unseated conqueror, on St Helena. His father's house stands close by. An old Italian waiting-woman, who had been long in the service of the Murats, keeps it and shows it. She has the manners of a lady, and can tell many stories of the various members of the Buonaparte family. Those who fancy that Napoleon was born in a mean dwelling of poor parents will be surprised to find so much space and elegance in these apartments. Of course his family was not rich by comparison with the riches of French or English nobles. But for Corsicans they were well to do, and their house

has an air of antique dignity. The chairs of the entrance-saloon have been literally stripped of their coverings by enthusiastic visitors: the horse-hair stuffing underneath protrudes itself with a sort of comic pride, as if protesting that it came to be so tattered in an honourable service. Some of the furniture seems new; but many old presses, inlaid with marbles, agates, and lapis lazuli, such as Italian families preserve for generations, have an air of respectable antiquity about them. Nor is there any doubt that the young Napoleon led his minuets beneath the stiff girandoles of the formal dancing-room. There, too, in a dark back chamber, is the bed in which he was born. At its foot is a photograph of the present Prince Imperial sent by the Empress Eugenie, who, when she visited the room, wept much—*pianse molto* (to use the old lady's phrase)—at seeing the place where such lofty destinies began. On the wall of the same room is a portrait of Napoleon himself as the young general of the republic—with the citizen's unkempt hair, the fierce fire of the Revolution in his eyes, a frown upon his forehead, lips compressed, and quivering nostrils; also one of his mother, the pastille of a handsome woman, with Napoleonic eyes and brows and nose, but with a vacant simpering mouth. Perhaps the provincial artist knew not how to seize the expression of this feature, the most difficult to draw. For we cannot fancy that Letizia had lips without the firmness or the fulness of a majestic nature.

The whole first story of this house belonged to the Buonaparte family. The windows look out partly on a little court and partly on narrow streets. It was, no doubt, the memory of this home that made Napoleon, when emperor, design schemes for the good of Corsica

—schemes that might have brought him more honour than many conquests, but which he had no time or leisure to carry out. On St Helena his mind often reverted to them, and he would speak of the gummy odours of the macchi wafted from the hillsides to the sea-shore.

SIENA.

AFTER leaving the valley of the Arno at Empoli, the railway enters a country which rises into earthy hills of no great height, and spreads out at intervals into broad tracts of cultivated lowland. Geologically speaking, this portion of Tuscany consists of loam and sandy deposits, forming the basin between two mountain ranges—the Apennines and the chalk hills of the western coast of Central Italy. Seen from the eminence of some old Tuscan turret, this champaign country has a stern and arid aspect. The earth is grey and dusty, the forms of hill and valley are mean and insignificant; even the vegetation seems to sympathise with the uninteresting soil from which it springs. A few spare olives cast their shadows on the lower slopes; here and there a copse of oakwood and acacia marks the course of some small rivulet; rye-fields, grey beneath the wind, clothe the hillsides with scanty verdure. Every knoll is crowned with a village—brown roofs and white house-fronts clustered together on the edge of cliffs, and rising into the campanile or antique tower, which tells so many stories of bygone wars and decayed civilisations.

Beneath these villages stand groups of stone-pines clearly visible upon the naked country, cypresses like spires beside the square white walls of convent or of villa, patches of dark foliage, showing where the ilex

and the laurel and the myrtle hide thick tangles of rose-trees and jessamines in ancient gardens. Nothing can exceed the barren aspect of this country in midwinter: it resembles an exaggerated Sussex, without verdure to relieve the rolling lines of down, and hill, and valley; beautiful alone by reason of its frequent villages and lucid air. But when spring comes, a light and beauty break upon this gloomy soil; the whole is covered with a delicate green veil of rising crops and fresh foliage, and the immense distances which may be seen from every height are blue with cloud-shadows, or rosy in the light of sunset.

Of all the towns of Lower Tuscany, none is more celebrated than Siena. It stands in the very centre of the district which I have attempted to describe, crowning one of its most considerable heights, and commanding one of its most extensive plains. As a city it is a typical representative of those numerous Italian towns, whose origin is buried in remote antiquity, which have formed the seat of three civilisations, and which still maintain a vigorous vitality upon their ancient soil. Its site is Etruscan, its name is Roman, but the town itself owes all its interest and beauty to the artists and the statesmen and the warriors of the middle ages. A single glance at Siena from one of the slopes on the northern side, will show how truly mediæval is its character. A city wall follows the outline of the hill, from which the towers of the cathedral and the palace, with other cupolas and red-brick campanili, spring; while cypresses and olive-gardens stretch downwards to the plain. There is not a single Palladian façade or Renaissance portico to interrupt the unity of the effect. Over all, in the distance, rises Radicofani, melting imperceptibly into sky and plain.

The three most striking objects of interest in Siena maintain the character of mediæval individuality by which the town is marked. They are the public palace, the cathedral, and the house of St Catherine. The civil life, the arts, and the religious tendencies of Italy during the ascendancy of mediæval ideas, are strongly set before us here. High above every other building in the town soars the straight brick tower of the Palazzo Pubblico, the house of the republic, the hearth of civil life within the State. It guards an irregular Gothic building in which the old government of Siena used to be assembled, but which has now for a long time been converted into prisons, courts of law, and showrooms. Let us enter one chamber of the Palazzo—the Sala della Pace, where Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the greatest, perhaps, of Sienese painters, represented the evils of lawlessness and tyranny, and the benefits of peace and justice, in three noble allegories. They were executed early in the fourteenth century, in the age of allegories and symbolism, when poets and painters strove to personify in human shape all thoughts and sentiments. The first great fresco represents Peace—the peace of the Republic of Siena. Ambrogio has painted the twenty-four councillors who formed the Government, standing beneath the thrones of Concord, Justice, and Wisdom. From these controlling powers they stretch in a long double line to a seated figure, gigantic in size, and robed with the ensigns of baronial sovereignty. This figure is the State and Majesty of Siena.* Around him sit Peace, Fortitude, and Prudence, Temperance, Magnanimity,

* It is probable that the firm Ghibelline sympathies of the Sienese people for the Empire were allegorised in this figure; so that the fresco represented by form and colour what Dante had expressed in his treatise "De Monarchiâ."

and Justice, inalienable assessors of a powerful and righteous lord. Faith, Hope, and Charity, the Christian virtues, float like angels in the air above. Armed horsemen guard his throne, and captives show that he has laid his enemy beneath his feet. Thus the mediæval artist expressed, by painting, his theory of government. The rulers of the State are subordinate to the State itself; they stand between the State and the great animating principles of wisdom, justice, and concord, incarnating the one, and receiving inspiration from the others. The pagan qualities of prudence, magnanimity, and courage, give stability and greatness to good government, while the spirit of Christianity must harmonise and rule the whole. Arms, too, are needful to maintain by force what right and law demand, and victory in a just quarrel proclaims the power and vigour of the commonwealth. On another wall Ambrogio has depicted the prosperous city of Siena, girt by battlements and moat, with tower and barbican and drawbridge, to insure its peace. Through the gates stream country-people, bringing the produce of their farms into the town. The streets are crowded with men and women intent on business or pleasure: craftsmen at their trade, merchants with laden mules, a hawking party, hunters scouring the plain, girls dancing, and children playing in the open square. A schoolmaster watching his class, together with the sculptured figures of Geometry, Astronomy, and Philosophy, remind us that education and science flourish under the dominion of well-balanced laws. The third fresco exhibits the reverse of this fair spectacle. Here Tyranny presides over a scene of anarchy and wrong. He is a hideous monster, compounded of all the bestial attributes which indicate force, treason, lechery, and fear. Avarice and Fraud and Cruelty and War and Fury sit

around him. At his feet lies Justice, and above are the effigies of Nero, Caracalla, and like monsters of ill-regulated power. Not far from the castle of Tyranny we see the same town as in the other fresco; but its streets are filled with scenes of quarrel, theft, and bloodshed. Nor are these allegories merely fanciful. In the middle ages the same city might more than once during one lifetime present in the vivid colours of reality the two contrasted pictures.*

Quitting the Palazzo, and threading narrow streets, paved with brick and overshadowed with huge empty palaces, we reach the highest of the three hills on which Siena stands, and see before us the Duomo. This church is the most purely Gothic of all Italian cathedrals designed by national architects. Together with that of Orvieto, it stands to show what the unassisted genius of the Italians could produce, when under the empire of mediæval Christianity and before the advent of the neopagan spirit. It is built wholly of marble, and overlaid, inside and out, with florid ornaments of exquisite beauty. There are no flying buttresses, no pinnacles, no deep and fretted doorways, such as form the charm of French and English architecture; but instead of this, the lines of particoloured marbles, the scrolls and wreaths of foliage, the mosaics and the frescoes which meet the eye in every direction, satisfy our sense of variety, producing most agreeable combinations of blending hues and harmoniously connected forms. The chief fault which offends against our Northern taste is the predominance of horizontal lines,

* Siena, of all Italian cities, was most subject to revolutions. Comines describes it as a city which "se gouverne plus follement que ville d'Italie." Varchi calls it "un guazzabuglio ed una confusione di repubbliche piuttosto che bene ordinata e instituta repubblica."

both in the construction of the façade, and also in the internal decoration. This single fact sufficiently proves that the Italians had never seized the true idea of Gothic or aspiring architecture. But, allowing for this original defect, we feel that the Cathedral of Siena combines solemnity and splendour to a degree almost unrivalled. Its dome is another point in which the instinct of Italian architects has led them to adhere to the genius of their ancestral art rather than to follow the principles of Gothic design. The dome is Etruscan and Roman, native to the soil, and only by a kind of violence adapted to the character of pointed architecture. Yet the builders of Siena have shown what a glorious element of beauty might have been added to our Northern cathedrals, had the idea of infinity which our ancestors expressed by long continuous lines, by complexities of interwoven aisles, and by multitudinous aspiring pinnacles, been carried out into vast spaces of aerial cupolas, completing and embracing and covering the whole like heaven. The Duomo, as it now stands, forms only part of a vast original design. On entering we are amazed to hear that this church, which looks so large, from the beauty of its proportions, the intricacy of its ornaments, and the interlacing of its columns, is but the transept of the old building lengthened a little, and surmounted by a cupola and campanile. Yet such is the fact. Soon after its commencement a plague swept over Italy, nearly depopulated Siena, and reduced the town to penury for want of men. The cathedral, which, had it been accomplished, would have surpassed all Gothic churches south of the Alps, remained a ruin. A fragment of the nave still stands, enabling us to judge of its extent. The eastern wall joins what was to have been the transept, measuring

the mighty space which would have been enclosed by marble vaults and columns delicately wrought. The sculpture on the eastern door shows with what magnificence the Sienese designed to ornament this portion of their temple; while the southern façade rears itself aloft above the town, like those high arches which testify to the past splendour of Glastonbury Abbey; but the sun streams through the broken windows, and the walls are encumbered with hovels and stables and the refuse of surrounding streets. One most remarkable feature of the internal decoration is a line of heads of the Popes carried all round the church above the lower arches. Larger than life, white solemn faces, they lean, each from his separate niche, crowned with the triple tiara, and labelled with the name he bore. Their accumulated majesty brings the whole past history of the Church into the presence of its living members. A bishop walking up the nave of Siena must feel as a Roman felt among the waxen images of ancestors renowned in council or in war. Of course these portraits are imaginary for the most part; but the artists have contrived to vary their features and expression with great skill.

Not less peculiar to Siena is the pavement of the cathedral. It is inlaid with a kind of *tarsia* work in stone, not unlike that which Baron Triqueti used in his "Marmor Homericum"—less elaborately decorative, but even more artistic and subordinate to architectural effect than the baron's mosaic. Some of these compositions are as old as the cathedral; others are the work of Beccafumi and his scholars. They represent, in the liberal spirit of mediæval Christianity, the history of the Church before the Incarnation. Hermes Trismegistus and the Sibyls meet us at the doorway: in the body of

the church we find the mighty deeds of the old Jewish heroes—of Moses and Samson and Joshua and Judith. Independently of the artistic beauty of the designs, of the skill with which men and horses are drawn in the most difficult attitudes, of the dignity of some single figures, and of the vigour and simplicity of the larger compositions, a special interest attaches to this pavement in connection with the twelfth canto of the "Purgatorio." Did Dante ever tread these stones and meditate upon their sculptured histories? That is what we cannot say; but we read how he journeyed through the plain of Purgatory with eyes intent upon its storied floor, how "morti i morti, e i vivi parean vivi," how he saw "Nimrod at the foot of his great work, confounded, gazing at the people who were proud with him." The strong and simple outlines of the pavement correspond to the few words of the poet. Bending over these pictures and trying to learn their lesson, with the thought of Dante in our mind, the tones of an organ, singularly sweet and mellow, fall upon our ears, and we remember how he heard *Te Deum* sung within the gateway of repentance.

Continuing our walk, we descend the hill on which the Duomo stands, and reach a valley lying between the ancient city of Siena and a western eminence crowned by the church of San Domenico. In this depression there has existed from old time a kind of suburb or separate district of the poorer people known by the name of the Contrada d'Oca. To the Sienese it has especial interest, for here is the birthplace of St Catherine, the very house in which she lived, her father's workshop, and the chapel which has been erected in commemoration of her saintly life. Over the doorway is written in letters of gold "Sposæ Christi Katherinæ

domus." Inside they show the room she occupied, and the stone on which she placed her head to sleep; they keep her veil and staff and lantern and enamelled vinaigrette, the bag in which her alms were placed, the sackcloth that she wore beneath her dress, the crucifix from which she took the wounds of Christ. It is impossible to conceive, even after the lapse of several centuries, that any of these relics are fictitious. Every particular of her life was remembered and recorded with scrupulous attention by devoted followers. Her fame was universal throughout Italy before her death; and the house from which she went forth to preach and heal the sick and comfort plague-stricken wretches whom kith and kin had left alone to die, was known and well beloved by all her citizens. From the moment of her death it became, and has continued to be, the object of superstitious veneration to thousands. From the little loggia which runs along one portion of its exterior may be seen the campanile and the dome of the cathedral; on the other side rises the huge brick church of San Domenico, in which she spent the long ecstatic hours that won for her the title of Christ's spouse. In a chapel attached to the church she watched and prayed, fasting and wrestling with the fiends of a disordered fancy. There Christ appeared to her and gave her his own heart, there he administered to her the sacrament with his own hands, there she assumed the robe of poverty and gave her Lord the silver cross and took from him the crown of thorns. To some of us these legends may appear the flimsiest web of fiction: to others they may seem quite explicable by the laws of semi-morbid psychology: but to Catherine herself, her biographers, and her contemporaries, they were not so. The enthusiastic saint and reverent people believed firmly in these things; and after the lapse of five cen-

turies her votaries still kiss the floor and steps on which she trod, still say, "This was the wall on which she leant when Christ appeared; this was the corner where she clothed him, naked and shivering like a beggar-boy; here he sustained her with angels' food."

St Catherine was one of twenty-five children born in wedlock to Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa, citizens of Siena. Her father exercised the trade of dyer and fuller. In the year of her birth, 1347, Siena reached the climax of its power and splendour. It was then that the plague of Boccaccio began to rage, which swept off 80,000 citizens, and interrupted the building of the great Duomo. In the midst of so large a family, and during these troubled times, Catherine grew almost unnoticed; but it was not long before she manifested her peculiar disposition. At six years old she already saw visions and longed for a monastic life: about the same time she used to collect her childish companions together and preach to them. As she grew, her wishes became stronger; she refused the proposals which her parents made that she should marry, and so vexed them by her obstinacy that they imposed on her the most servile duties in their household. These she patiently fulfilled, pursuing at the same time her own vocation with unwearied ardour. She scarcely slept at all, and ate no food but vegetables and a little bread, scourged herself, wore sackcloth, and became emaciated, weak, and half delirious. At length the firmness of her character and the force of her hallucinations won the day. Her parents consented to her assuming the Dominican robe, and at the age of thirteen she entered the monastic life. From this moment till her death we see in her the ecstatic, the philanthropist, and the politician combined to a remarkable degree. For three whole years she never left her

cell except to go to church, maintaining an almost unbroken silence. Yet when she returned to the world, convinced at last of having won by prayer and pain the favour of her Lord, it was to preach to infuriated mobs, to toil among men dying of the plague, to execute diplomatic negotiations, to harangue the republic of Florence, to correspond with queens, and to interpose between kings and popes. In the midst of this varied and distracting career she continued to see visions and to fast and scourge herself. The domestic virtues and the personal wants and wishes of a woman were annihilated in her: she lived for the Church, for the poor, and for Christ, whom she imagined to be constantly supporting her. At length she died, worn out by inward conflicts, by the tension of religious ecstasy, by want of food and sleep, and by the excitement of political life. To follow her in her public career is not my purpose. It is well known how, by the power of her eloquence and the ardour of her piety, she succeeded as a mediator between Florence and her native city, and between Florence and the Pope; that she travelled to Avignon and there induced Gregory XI. to put an end to the Babylonian captivity of the Church by returning to Rome; that she narrowly escaped political martyrdom during one of her embassies from Gregory to the Florentine republic; that she preached a crusade against the Turks; that her last days were clouded with sorrow for the schism which then rent the Papacy; and that she aided by her dying words to keep Pope Urban on the Papal throne. When we consider her private and spiritual life more narrowly, it may well move our amazement to think that the intricate politics of Central Italy, the counsels of licentious princes and ambitious popes, were in any measure guided and controlled by such a woman. Alone and

aided by nothing but a reputation for sanctity, she dared to tell the greatest men in Europe of their faults; she wrote in words of absolute command, and they, demoralised, worldly, sceptical, or indifferent as they might be, were yet so bound by superstition that they dared not treat with scorn the voice of an enthusiastic girl.

Absolute disinterestedness, the belief in her own spiritual mission, natural genius, and that vast power which then belonged to all energetic members of the monastic orders, enabled her to play this part. She had no advantages to begin with. The daughter of a tradesman overwhelmed with an almost fabulously numerous progeny, Catherine grew up uneducated. When her genius had attained maturity, she could not even read or write. Her biographer asserts that she learned to do so by a miracle. Anyhow, writing became a most potent instrument in her hands; and we possess several volumes of her epistles, as well as a treatise of mystical theology. To conquer self-love as the root of all evil, and to live wholly for others, was the cardinal axiom of her morality. She pressed this principle to its most rigorous conclusions in practice; never resting day or night from some kind of service, and winning by her unselfish love the enthusiastic admiration of the people. In the same spirit of exalted self-annihilation, she longed for martyrdom, and courted death. There was not the smallest personal tie or after-thought of interest to restrain her in the course of action which she had marked out. Her personal influence seems to have been immense. When she began her career of public peacemaker and preacher in Siena, Raymond, her biographer, says that whole families devoted to *vendetta* were reconciled, and that civil strifes were quelled by

her letters and addresses. He had seen more than a thousand people flock to hear her speak; the confessionals crowded with penitents, smitten by the force of her appeals; and multitudes, unable to catch the words which fell from her lips, sustained and animated by the light of holiness which beamed from her inspired countenance.* She was not beautiful, but her face so shone with love, and her eloquence was so pathetic in its tenderness, that none could hear or look on her without emotion. Her writings contain abundant proofs of this peculiar suavity. They are too sweet and unctuous in style to suit our modern taste. When dwelling on the mystic love of Christ she cries, "O blood! O fire! O ineffable love!" When interceding before the Pope, she prays for "Pace, pace, pace, babbo mio dolce; pace, e non più guerra." Yet clear and simple thoughts, profound convictions, and stern moral teaching underlie her ecstatic exclamations. One prayer which she wrote, and which the people of Siena still use, expresses the prevailing spirit of her creed: "O Spirito Santo, o Deità eterna Cristo Amore! vieni nel mio cuore; per la tua potenza trailo a Te, mio Dio, e concedemi carità con timore. Liberami, o Amore ineffabile, da ogni mal' pensiero; riscaldami ed infiammami del tuo dolcissimo amore, sicchè ogni pena mi sembri leggiera. Santo mio Padre e dolce mio Signore, ora aiutami in ogni mio ministero. Cristo amore. Cristo amore." The reiteration of the word "love" is most significant. It was the keynote of her whole theology, the mainspring of her life. In no merely figurative sense did she regard herself as the spouse of Christ, but dwelt upon the bliss, beyond all mortal happiness, which she enjoyed in

* The part played in Italy by preachers of repentance and peace is among the most characteristic features of Italian history.

supersensual communion with her Lord. It is easy to understand how such ideas might be, and have been, corrupted, when impressed on natures no less susceptible, but weaker and less gifted than St Catherine's.

One incident related by Catherine in a letter to Raymond, her confessor and biographer, exhibits the peculiar character of her influence in the most striking light. Nicola Tuldo, a citizen of Perugia, had been condemned to death for treason in the flower of his age. So terribly did the man rebel against his sentence, that he cursed God, and refused the consolations of religion. Priests visited him in vain; his heart was shut and sealed by the despair of leaving life in all the vigour of its prime. Then Catherine came and spoke to him: "whence," she says, "he received such comfort that he confessed, and made me promise, by the love of God, to stand at the block beside him on the day of his execution." By a few words, by the tenderness of her manner, and by the charm which women have, she had already touched the heart no priest could soften, and no threat of death or judgment terrify into contrition. Nor was this strange. In our days we have seen men open the secrets of their hearts to women, after repelling the advances of less touching sympathy. We have seen youths, cold and cynical enough among their brethren, stand subdued like little children before her who spoke to them of love and faith and penitence and hope. The world has not lost its ladies of the race of St Catherine, beautiful and pure and holy, who have suffered and sought peace with tears, and who have been appointed ministers of mercy for the worst and hardest of their fellow-men. Such saints possess an efficacy even in the imposition of their hands; many a devotee, like Tuldo, would more

willingly greet death if his St Catherine were by to smile and lay her hands upon his head, and cry, "Go forth, my servant, and fear not!" The chivalrous admiration for women mixes with religious awe to form the reverence which these saints inspire. Human and heavenly love, chaste and ecstatic, constitute the secret of their power. Catherine then subdued the spirit of Tuldo and led him to the altar, where he received the communion for the first time in his life. His only remaining fear was that he might not have strength to face death bravely. Therefore he prayed Catherine, "Stay with me, do not leave me; so it shall be well with me, and I shall die contented;" "and," says the saint, "he laid his head in the prison on my breast, and I said, 'Comfort thee, my brother, the block shall soon become thy marriage altar, the blood of Christ shall bathe thy sins away, and I will stand beside thee.'" When the hour came, she went and waited for him by the scaffold, meditating on Madonna and Catherine the saint of Alexandria. She laid her own neck on the block, and tried to picture to herself the pains and ecstasies of martyrdom. In her deep thought, time and place became annihilated; she forgot the eager crowd, and only prayed for Tuldo's soul and for herself. At length he came, walking "like a gentle lamb," and Catherine received him with the salutation of "sweet brother." She placed his head upon the block, and laid her hands upon him, and told him of the Lamb of God. The last words he uttered were the names of Jesus and of Catherine. Then the axe fell, and Catherine beheld his soul borne by angels into the regions of eternal love. When she recovered from her trance, she held his head within her hands; her dress was saturated with his blood, which she could scarcely bear to wash away, so deeply

did she triumph in the death of him whom she had saved. The words of St Catherine herself deserve to be read. The simplicity, freedom from self-consciousness, and fervent faith in the reality of all she did and said and saw, which they exhibit, convince us of her entire sincerity.

The supernatural element in the life of St Catherine may be explained partly by the mythologising adoration of the people ready to find a miracle in every act of her they worshipped—partly by her own temperament and modes of life, which inclined her to ecstasy and fostered the faculty of seeing visions—partly by a pious misconception of the words of Christ and Bible phraseology.

To the first class belong the wonders which are related of St Catherine's early years, the story of the candle which burnt her veil without injuring her person, and the miracles performed by her body after death. Many childish incidents were treasured up, which, had her life proved different, would have been forgotten, or have found their proper place among the catalogue of common things. Thus on one occasion, after hearing of the hermits of the Thebaïd, she took it into her head to retire into the wilderness, and chose for her dwelling one of the caverns in the sandstone rock which abound in Siena near the quarter where her father lived. We merely see in this event a sign of her monastic disposition, and a more than usual aptitude for realising the ideas presented to her mind. But the old biographers relate how one celestial vision urged the childish hermit to forsake the world, and another bade her return to the duties of her home.

To the second class we may refer the frequent communings with Christ and with the fathers of the Church,

together with the other visions to which she frequently laid claim: nor must we omit the stigmata which she believed she had received from Christ. St Catherine was constitutionally inclined to hallucinations. At the age of six, before it was probable that a child should have laid claim to spiritual gifts which she did not possess, she burst into loud weeping because her little brother rudely distracted her attention from the brilliant forms of saints and angels which she traced among the clouds. Almost all children of a vivid imagination are apt to transfer the objects of their fancy to the world without them. Goethe walked for hours in his enchanted gardens as a boy, and Alfieri tells us how he saw a company of angels in the choristers at Asti. Nor did St Catherine omit any means of cultivating this faculty, and of preventing her splendid visions from fading away, as they almost always do, beneath the discipline of intellectual education and among the distractions of daily life. Believing simply in their heavenly origin, and receiving no secular training whatsoever, she walked surrounded by a spiritual world, environed, as her legend says, by angels. Her habits were calculated to foster this disposition: it is related that she took but little sleep, scarcely more than two hours at night, and that too on the bare ground; she ate nothing but vegetables and the sacred wafer of the host, entirely abjuring the use of wine and meat. In this way her physical forces were depressed, and her nervous system was thrown into a state of the highest exaltation. Thoughts became things, and ideas were projected from her vivid fancy upon the empty air around her. It was therefore no wonder, that after spending long hours in vigils and meditating always on the thought of Christ, she should have

seemed to take the sacrament from his hands, to pace the chapel in communion with him, to meet him in the form of priest and beggar, to hear him speaking to her as a friend. Once when the anguish of sin had plagued her with disturbing dreams, Christ came and gave her his own heart in exchange for hers. When lost in admiration before the cross at Pisa, she saw his five wounds stream with blood—five crimson rays smote her, passed into her soul, and left their marks upon her hands and feet and side. The light of Christ's glory shone round about her, she partook of his martyrdom, and awaking from her trance she cried to Raymond, "Behold! I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus!" This miracle had happened to St Francis. It was regarded as the sign of fellowship with Christ, of worthiness to drink his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism. We find the same idea at least in the old Latin hymns:—

> Fac me plagis vulnerari—
> Cruce hâc inebriari—
> Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
> Passionis fac consortem,
> Et plagas recolere.

These are words from the *Stabat Mater*; nor did St Francis and St Catherine do more than carry into the vividness of actual hallucination what had been the poetic rapture of many less ecstatic, but not less ardent, souls. They desired to be *literally* "crucified with Christ;" they were not satisfied with metaphor or sentiment, and it seemed to them that their Lord had really vouchsafed to them the yearning of their heart. We need not here raise the question whether the stigmata had ever been actually self-inflicted by delirious saint or hermit: it was not pretended that the wounds of St

Catherine were visible during her lifetime. After her death the faithful thought that they had seen them on her corpse, and they actually appeared in the relics of her hands and feet. The pious fraud, if fraud there must have been, should be ascribed, not to the saint herself, but to devotees and relic-mongers.* The order of St Dominic would not be behind that of St Francis. If the latter boasted of their stigmata, the former would be ready to perforate the hand or foot of their dead saint. Thus the ecstasies of genius or devotion are brought to earth, and rendered vulgar by mistaken piety and the rivalry of sects. The people put the most material construction on all tropes and metaphors: above the door of St Catherine's chapel at Siena, for example, it is written—

Hæc tenet ara caput Catharinæ; corda requiris?
Hæc imo Christus pectore clausa tenet.

The frequent conversations which St Catherine held with St Dominic and other patrons of the Church, and her supernatural marriage, must be referred to the same category. Strong faith, and constant familiarity with one order of ideas, joined with a creative power of fancy, and fostered by physical debility, produced these miraculous colloquies. Early in her career, her injured constitution, resenting the violence with which it had been forced to serve the ardours of her piety, troubled her with foul phantoms, haunting images of sin and seductive whisperings, which clearly revealed a morbid condition of the nervous system. She was on

* It is not impossible that the stigmata may have been naturally produced in the person of St Francis or St Catherine. There are cases on record in which grave nervous disturbances have resulted in such modifications of the flesh as may have left the traces of wounds in scars and blisters.

the verge of insanity. The reality of her inspiration and her genius are proved by the force with which her human sympathies, and moral dignity, and intellectual vigour triumphed over these diseased hallucinations of the cloister, and converted them into the instruments of effecting patriotic and philanthropic designs. There was nothing mean or thaumaturgical about her supernatural environments. Whatever we may think of the wisdom of her public policy with regard to the Crusades and to the Papal Sovereignty, it is impossible to deny that a holy and high object possessed her from the earliest to the latest of her life—that she lived for ideas greater than self-aggrandisement or the saving of her soul, for the greatest, perhaps, which her age presented to an earnest Catholic. The abuses to which the indulgence of temperaments like that of St Catherine must in many cases have given rise, are obvious. Hysterical women and half-witted men, without possessing her abilities and understanding her objects, beheld unmeaning visions, and dreamed childish dreams. Others won the reputation of sanctity, by obstinate neglect of all the duties of life and of all the decencies of personal cleanliness. Every little town in Italy could show its saints like the Santa Fina of whom San Gemignano boasts — a girl who lay for seven years on a backboard till her mortified flesh clung to the wood; or the San Bartolo, who, for hideous leprosy, received the title of the Job of Tuscany. Children were encouraged in blasphemous pretensions to the special power of heaven, and the nerves of weak women were shaken by revelations in which they only half believed. The exaggerated, but instructive pictures of the Abbé —— show how the trade of miracles is still carried on, and how in the France of our days, when

intellectual vigour has been separated from old forms of faith, such vision-mongering undermines morality, encourages ignorance, and saps the force of individuals. But St Catherine must not be confounded with those sickly shams and make-believes. Her enthusiasms were real: they were proper to her age; they inspired her with unrivalled self-devotion and unwearied energy; they connected her with the political and social movements of her country.

Many of the supernatural events in St Catherine's life were founded on a too literal acceptation of biblical metaphors. The Canticles, perhaps, inspired her with the belief in a mystical marriage. An enigmatical sentence of St Paul's suggested the stigmata. When the saint bestowed her garment upon Christ in the form of a beggar, and gave him the silver cross of her rosary, she was but realising his own words: "Inasmuch as ye shall do it unto the least of these little ones, ye shall do it unto me." Charity, according to her conception, consisted in giving to Christ. He had first taught this duty; he would make it the test of all duty at the last day. Catherine was charitable for the love of Christ. She thought less of the beggar than of her Lord. How could she do otherwise than see the aureole about his forehead, and hear the voice of him who had declared, "Behold, I am with you, even to the end of the world." Happy times when the eye of love was still unclouded, when men could see beyond the phantoms of this world, and stripping off the accidents of matter, gaze upon the spiritual and eternal truths that lie beneath! Heaven lay around them in that infancy of faith; nor did they greatly differ from the saints and founders of the Church — from Paul, who saw the vision of the Lord; or Magdalen, who

cried, "He is risen!" An age accustomed to veil thought in symbols, easily reversed the process and discerned essential qualities beneath the common or indifferent objects of the outer world. It was therefore Christ whom St. Christopher carried in the shape of a child; Christ whom Fra Angelico's Dominicans received in pilgrim's garb at their convent gate; Christ with whom, under a leper's loathsome form, the flower of Spanish chivalry was said to have shared his couch.

In all her miracles it will be noticed that St Catherine showed no originality. Her namesake of Alexandria had already been proclaimed the spouse of Christ. St Francis had already received the stigmata; her other visions were such as had been granted to all fervent mystics; they were the growth of current religious ideas and unbounded faith. It is not as an innovator in religious ecstasy, or as the creator of a new kind of spiritual poetry, that we admire St Catherine. Her inner life was simply the foundation of her character, her visions were a source of strength to her in times of trial; but the means by which she moved the hearts of men belonged to that which she possessed in common with all leaders of mankind—enthusiasm, eloquence, the charm of a gracious nature, and the will to do what she designed. She founded no religious order, like St Francis or St Dominic, her predecessors, or Ignatius, her successor. Her work was a woman's work—to make peace, to succour the afflicted, to strengthen the Church, to purify the hearts of those around her, not to rule or organise. When she died she left behind her a memory of love more than of power, the fragrance of an unselfish and gentle life, the echo of sweet and earnest words: her place is in the heart of the humble;

children belong to her sisterhood, and the poor crowd her shrine on festivals.

Catherine died at Rome on the 29th of April 1380, in her thirty-third year, surrounded by the most faithful of her friends and followers; but it was not until 1461 that she received the last honour of canonisation from the hands of Pius II., Æneas Sylvius, her countryman. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini was perhaps the most remarkable man that Siena has produced. Like St Catherine, he was one of a large family; twenty of his brothers and sisters perished in a plague. The licentiousness of his early life, the astuteness of his intellect, and the worldliness of his aims, contrast with the singularly disinterested character of the saint on whom he conferred the highest honours of the Church. But he accomplished by diplomacy and skill what Catherine had begun. If she was instrumental in restoring the Popes to Rome, he ended the schism which had clouded her last days. She had preached a crusade; he lived to assemble the armies of Christendom against the Turks, and died at Ancona, while it was still uncertain whether the authority and enthusiasm of a pope could steady the wavering counsels and uncertain wills of kings and princes. The middle ages were still vital in St Catherine; Pius II. belonged by taste and genius to the new period of Renaissance. The hundreds of the poorer Sienese who kneel before St Catherine's shrine prove that her memory is still alive in the hearts of her fellow-citizens; while the gorgeous library of the cathedral, painted by the hand of Pinturicchio, records the pride and splendour of the greatest of the Piccolomini. But honourable as it was for Pius to fill so high a place in the annals of his city; to have left it as a poor adventurer, to return to it first as bishop, then as pope;

to have a chamber in its mother church adorned with the pictured history of his achievements for a monument —yet we cannot but feel that the better part remains with St Catherine, whose prayer is still whispered by children on their mother's knee, and whose relics are kissed daily by the simple and devout.

Some of the chief Italian painters have represented the incidents of St Catherine's life and of her mystical experience. All the pathos and beauty which we admire in Sodoma's "St Sebastian," at Florence, are surpassed by his fresco of St Catherine receiving the stigmata. This is one of two subjects painted by him on the walls of her chapel in San Domenico. The tender devotion, the sweetness, the languor, and the grace which he commanded with such admirable mastery, are all combined in the figure of the saint falling exhausted into the arms of her attendant nuns. Soft undulating lines rule the composition; yet dignity of attitude and feature prevails over mere loveliness. Another of Siena's greatest masters, Beccafumi, has treated the same subject with less pictorial skill and dramatic effect, but with an earnestness and simplicity that are very touching. Colourists always liked to introduce the sweeping lines of her white robes into their compositions. Fra Bartolommeo, who showed consummate art by tempering the masses of white drapery with mellow tones of brown or amber, painted one splendid picture of the marriage of St Catherine, and another in which he represents her prostrate in adoration before the mystery of the Trinity. His gentle and devout soul sympathised with the spirit of St Catherine. The fervour of her devotion belonged to him more truly than the leonine power which he unsuccessfully attempted to express in his large figure

of St Mark. Other artists have painted the two St Catherines together—the princess of Alexandria, crowned and robed in purple, bearing her palm of martyrdom, beside the nun of Siena, holding in her hand the lantern with which she went about by night among the sick. Ambrogio Borgognone makes them stand one on each side of Madonna's throne, while the infant Christ upon her lap extends his hands to both, in token of their marriage.

The traditional type of countenance which may be traced in all these pictures is not without a real foundation. Not only does there exist at Siena, in the Church of San Domenico, a contemporary portrait of St Catherine, but her head also, which was embalmed immediately after death, is still preserved. The skin of the face is fair and white, like parchment, and the features have more the air of sleep than death. We find in them the breadth and squareness of general outline, and the long, even eyebrows which give peculiar calm to the expression of her pictures. This relic is shown publicly once a year on the 6th of May. That is the Festa of St Catherine, when a procession of priests and acolytes and pious people holding tapers, and little girls dressed out in white, carry a splendid silver image of their patroness about the city. Banners and crosses and censers go in front; then follows the shrine beneath a canopy: roses and leaves of box are scattered on the path. The whole Contrada d'Oca is decked out with such finery as the people can muster: red cloths hung from the windows, branches and garlands strewn about the doorsteps, with brackets for torches on the walls, and altars erected in the middle of the street. Troops of country-folk and townspeople and priests go in and out to visit the cell of St Catherine; the upper and the

lower chapel, built upon its site, and the hall of the *confraternità* blaze with lighted tapers. The faithful, full of wonder, kneel or stand about the "santi luoghi," marvelling at the relics, and repeating to one another the miracles of the saints. The same bustle pervades the Church of San Domenico. Masses are being said at one or other chapel all the morning, while women in their flapping Tuscan hats crowd round the silver image of St Catherine, and say their prayers with a continual undercurrent of responses to the nasal voice of priest or choir. Others gain entrance to the chapel of the saint, and kneel before her altar. There, in the blaze of sunlight and of tapers, far away behind the gloss and gilding of a tawdry shrine, is seen the pale, white face which spoke and suffered so much, years ago. The contrast of its rigid stillness and half-concealed corruption with the noise and life and light outside is very touching. Even so the remnant of a dead idea still stirs the souls of thousands, and many ages may roll by before time and oblivion assert their inevitable sway.

PERUGIA.

PERUGIA is the empress of hill-set Italian cities. Southward from its high-built battlements and church towers, the eye can sweep a circuit of the Apennines unrivalled in its width. From cloudlike Radicofani, above Siena in the west, to snow-capped Monte Catria, beneath whose summit Dante spent those saddest months of solitude in 1313, the mountains curve continuously in lines of austere dignity and tempered sweetness. Assisi, Spoleto, Todi, Trevi, crown lesser heights within the range of vision. Here and there the glimpse of distant rivers lights a silver spark upon the plain. Those hills conceal Lake Thrasymene; and there lies Orvieto, and Ancona there: while at our feet the Umbrian champaign, breaking away into the valley of the Tiber, spreads in all the largeness of majestically converging mountain slopes. This is a landscape which can never lose its charm. Whether it be purple golden summer, or winter with sad tints of russet woods and faintly rosy snows, or spring attired in tenderest green of new-fledged trees and budding flowers, the air is always pure and light and finely tempered here. City gates, sombre as their own antiquity, frame vistas of the laughing fields. Terraces, flanked on either side by jutting masonry, cut clear vignettes of olive-hoary slopes, with cypress-shadowed farms in hollows of the hills. Each coign or point of vantage carries a bastion or tower of Etruscan,

Roman, mediæval architecture, tracing the limits of the town upon its mountain plateau. Everywhere art and nature lie side by side in amity beneath a sky so pure and delicate, that from its limpid depth the spirit seems to drink new life. What air-tints of lilac, orange, and pale amethyst are shed upon those vast ethereal hills and undulating plains! What wandering cloud-shadows sail across this sea of olives and of vines, with here and there a fleece of vapour or a column of blue smoke from charcoal burners on the mountain flank! To southward, far away beyond those hills, is felt the presence of eternal Rome, not seen, but clearly indicated by the hurrying of a hundred streams that swell the Tiber.

In the neighbourhood of the town itself there is plenty to attract the student of antiquities, or art, or history. He may trace the walls of the Etruscan city, and explore the vaults where the dust of the Volumnii lies coffered in sarcophagi and urns. Mild faces of grave deities lean from the living tufa above those narrow alcoves, where the chisel-marks are still fresh, and where the vigilant lamps still hang suspended from the roof by leaden chains. Or, in the Museum, he may read on bas-reliefs and vases how gloomy and morose were the superstitions of those obscure forerunners of majestic Rome. The piazza offers one of the most perfect Gothic façades, in its Palazzo Pubblico, to be found in Italy. The flight of marble steps is guarded from above by the bronze griffin of Perugia and the Baglioni, with the bronze lion of the Guelf faction, to which the town was ever faithful. Upon their marble brackets they ramp in all the lean ferocity of feudal heraldry, and from their claws hang down the chains wrested in old warfare from some barricaded gateway of Siena. Below is the foun-

tain, on the many-sided curves of which Giovanni Pisano sculptured, in quaint statuettes and bas-reliefs, all the learning of the middle ages, from the Bible history down to fables of Æsop and allegories of the several months. Facing the same piazza is the Sala del Cambio, a mediæval Bourse, with its tribunal for the settlement of mercantile disputes, and its exquisite carved woodwork and frescoes, the masterpiece of Perugino's school. Hard by is the University, once crowded with native and foreign students, where the eloquence of Ognibene in the first dawn of the Renaissance withdrew the gallants of Perugia—those slim youths with shocks of nut-brown hair beneath their tiny red caps, whose comely legs, encased in tight-fitting hose of two different colours, look so strange to modern eyes upon the canvas of Signorelli —from their dice and wine-cups and amours and daggers, to grave studies in the lore of Greece and Rome. This piazza, the scene of all the bloodiest tragedies in Perugian annals, is terminated at the north end by the Cathedral, with the open pulpit in its wall from which St Bernardino of Siena preached peace in vain. The citizens wept to hear his words: a bonfire of vanities was lighted on the flags beside Pisano's fountain: foe kissed foe: and the same cowl of St Francis was set in token of repentance on heads that long had schemed destruction, each for each. But a few days passed, and the penitents returned to cut each other's throat. Often and often have those steps of the Duomo run with blood of Baglioni, Oddi, Arcipreti, and La Staffa. Once the whole church had to be washed with wine and blessed anew before the rites of Christianity could be resumed in its desecrated aisles. It was here that within the space of two days, in 1500, the catafalque was raised for the murdered Astorre, and for his traitorous cousin Grifonetto

Baglioni. Here, too, if more ancient tradition does not err, were stretched the corpses of twenty-seven members of the same great house at the end of one of their grim combats.

No Italian city illustrates more forcibly than Perugia the violent contrasts of the earlier Renaissance. This is perhaps its most essential characteristic—that which constitutes its chief æsthetic interest. To many travellers the name of Perugia suggests at once the painter who, more than any other, gave expression to devout emotions in consummate works of pietistic art. They remember how Raphael, when a boy, with Pinturicchio, Lo Spagna, and Adone Doni, in the workshop of Pietro Perugino, learned the secret of that style to which he gave sublimity and freedom in his Madonnas di San Sisto, di Foligno, and del Cardellino. But the students of mediæval history in detail, know Perugia far better as the lion's lair of one of the most ferocious broods of heroic ruffians which Italy can boast. To them the name of Perugia suggests at once the great house of the Baglioni, who drenched Umbria with blood, and gave the broad fields of Assisi to the wolf, and who through six successive generations bred captains for the armies of Venice, Florence, Naples, and the Church.* That the trade of Perugino in religious pictures should have been carried on in the city which shared the factions of the Baglioni —that Raphael should have been painting Pietas while Astorre and Simonetto were being murdered by the beautiful young Grifonetto—is a paradox of the purest water in the history of civilisation. The art of Perugino

* Most of the references in this essay are made to the Perugian chronicles of Graziani, Matarazzo, Bontempi, and Frolliere, in the "Archivio Storico Italiano," vol. xvi. parts 1 and 2. Ariodante Fabretti's "Biografie dei Capitani Venturieri dell' Umbria" supply some details.

implied a large number of devout and wealthy patrons, a public not only capable of comprehending him, but also eager to restrict his great powers within the limits of purely devotional delineation. The feuds and passions of the Baglioni, on the other hand, implied a society in which egregious crimes only needed success to be accounted glorious, where force, cruelty, and cynical craft reigned supreme, and where the animal instincts attained gigantic proportions in the persons of splendid young athletic despots. Even the names of these Baglioni, Astorre, Lavinia, Zenobia, Atalanta, Troilo, Ercole, Annibale, Ascanio, Penelope, Orazio, and so forth, clash with the sweet mild forms of Perugino, whose very executioners are candidates for Paradise, and kill their martyrs with compunction. In Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such contradictions subsisted in the same place and under the conditions of a common culture, because there was no limit to the development of personality. Character was far more absolute then than now. The force of the modern world, working in the men of those times like powerful wine, as yet displayed itself only as a spirit of freedom and expansion and revolt. The strait laces of mediæval Christianity were loosened. The coercive action of public opinion had not yet made itself dominant. That was an age of adolescence, in which men were and dared to be *themselves* for good or evil. Hypocrisy, except for some solid, well-defined, selfish purpose, was unknown: the deference to established canons of decorum which constitutes more than half of our so-called morality, would have been scarcely intelligible to an Italian. The outlines of individuality were therefore strongly accentuated. Life itself was dramatic in its incidents and motives, its catastrophes and contrasts. These conditions, eminently

favourable to the growth of arts and the pursuit of science, were no less conducive to the hypertrophy of passions, and to the full development of ferocious and inhuman personalities. Every man did what seemed good in his own eyes. Far less restrained than we are by the verdict of his neighbours, but bound by faith more blind and fiercer superstitions, he displayed the contradictions of his character in picturesque chiaroscuro. What he could was the limit set on what he would. Therefore, considering the infinite varieties of human temperaments, it was not merely possible, but natural, for Pietro Perugino and Gianpaolo Baglioni to be inhabitants at the same time of the self-same city, and for the pious Atalanta to mourn the bloodshed and the treason of her Achillean son, the young and terrible Grifone. Here, in a word, in Perugia, beneath the fierce blaze of the Renaissance, were brought into splendid contrast both the martial violence and the religious sentiment of mediævalism, raised for a moment to the elevation of fine art. Some of Perugino's qualities can be studied better in Perugia than elsewhere. Of his purely religious pictures—altar-pieces of Madonna and Saints, martyrdoms of St Sebastian, Crucifixions, Ascensions, Annunciations, and Depositions from the Cross—fine specimens are exhibited in nearly all the galleries of Europe. A larger number of his works and of those of his scholars may be seen assembled in the Pinacoteca of Perugia. Yet the student of his pietistic style finds little here of novelty to notice. It is in the Sala del Cambio that we gain a really new conception of his faculty. Upon the decoration of that little hall he concentrated all his powers of invention. The frescoes of the Transfiguration and the Nativity, which face the great door, are the triumphs of his devotional manner. On other panels of the chamber

he has portrayed the philosophers of Greece and Rome, the kings and generals of antiquity, the prophets and the sibyls who announced Christ's advent. The roof is covered with arabesques of delicate design and dainty execution, labyrinths of fanciful improvisation, in which flowers and foliage and human forms are woven into a harmonious framework for the medallions of the seven planets. The woodwork with which the hall is lined below the frescoes, shows to what a point of perfection the art of intarsiatura had been carried in his school. All these decorative masterpieces are the product of one ingenuous style. Uninfluenced by the Roman frescoes imitated by Raphael in his Loggie of the Vatican, they breathe the spirit of the earlier Renaissance, which created for itself free forms of grace and loveliness without a pattern, divining by its innate sense of beauty what the classic artists had achieved. Take for an example the medallion of the planet Jupiter. The king of gods and men, hoary-headed and mild-eyed, is seated in his chariot drawn by eagles: before him kneels Ganymede, a fair-haired, exquisite, slim page, with floating mantle and ribbands fluttering round his tight hose and jerkin. Such were the cup-bearers of Galeazzo Sforza and Gianpaolo Baglioni. Then compare this fresco with the Jupiter in mosaic upon the cupola of the Chigi chapel in St^a^ Maria del Popolo at Rome. A new age of experience had passed over Raphael between his execution of Perugino's design in the one and his conception of the other. He had seen the marbles of the Vatican, and had heard of Plato in the interval: the simple graces of the earlier Renaissance were no longer enough for him; but he must realise the thought of classic myths in his new manner. In the same way we may compare this Transfiguration with Raphael's last

picture, these sibyls with those of Stª Maria della Pace, these sages with the School of Athens, these warriors with the Battle of Maxentius. What is characteristic of the full-grown Raphael, is his universal comprehension, his royal faculty for representing past and present, near and distant, things the most diverse, by forms ideal and yet distinctive. Each phase of the world's history and of human activity receives from him appropriate and elevated expression. What is characteristic of the frescoes in the Sala del Cambio, and indeed of the whole manner of Perugino, is that all subjects, sacred or secular, allegorical or real, are conceived in the same spirit of restrained and well-bred piety. There is no attempt at historical propriety or dramatic realism. Grave, ascetic, melancholy faces of saints are put on bodies of kings, generals, sages, sibyls, and deities alike. The same ribbands and studied draperies clothe and connect all. The same conventional attitudes of meditative gracefulness are repeated in each group. Yet the whole effect, if somewhat feeble and insipid, is harmonious and thoughtful. We see that each part has proceeded from the same mind, in the same mood, and that the master's mind was no common one, the mood itself was noble. Good taste is everywhere apparent: the work throughout is a masterpiece of refined fancy. To Perugino the representative imagination was of less importance than a certain delicate and adequately ideal mode of feeling and conceiving. The consequent charm of his style is that everything is thought out and rendered visible in one decorous key. The worst that can be said of it is that its suavity inclines to mawkishness, and that its quietism borders upon sleepiness. We find it difficult not to accuse him of affectation. At the same time we are forced to allow that what he

did, and what he refrained from doing, was determined by a purpose. A fresco of the Adoration of the Shepherds, and a picture of St Sebastian in the Pinacoteca, where the archer on the right hand is drawn in a natural attitude with force and truth, show well enough what Perugino could do when he chose. The best way of explaining his conventionality, in which the supreme power of a master is always verging on the facile trick of a mannerist, is to suppose that the people of Perugia and the Umbrian highlands imposed on him this narrow mode of treatment. We may presume that he was always receiving orders for pictures to be executed in his well-known manner. Celestial insipidity in art was the fashion in that Umbria which the Baglioni and the Popes laid waste from time to time with fire and sword. Therefore the painter who had made his reputation by placing devout young faces upon twisted necks, with a background of limpid twilight and calm landscape, was forced by the fervour of his patrons, and his own desire for money, to perpetuate pious prettinesses long after he had ceased to feel them. It is just this widespread popularity of a master unrivalled in one line of devotional sentimentalism, which makes the contrast between Perugino and the Baglioni family so striking. The Baglioni first came into notice during the wars they carried on with the Oddi of Perugia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.* This was one of those

* The Baglioni persecuted their rivals with persistent fury to the very last. Matarazzo tells how Morgante Baglioni gave a death-wound to his nephew, the young Carlo de li Oddi in 1501 : "Dielli una ferita nella formosa faccia : el quale era in aspetto vago e bello giovane d'anni 23 o 24, *al quale uscivano e bionde tresse sotto la bella armadura.*" The same night his kinsman Pompeo was murdered in prison with this last lament upon his lips : "O infelice casa degli Oddi, quale aveste tanta fama di conduttieri, capitanie, cavaliere, speron d'oro, protonotarie, e abbate ; et

duels to the death, like that of the Visconti with the Torrensi of Milan, on which the fate of so many Italian cities in the middle ages hung. The nobles fought; the townsfolk assisted like a Greek chorus, sharing the passions of the actors, but contributing little to the catastrophe. The piazza was the theatre on which the tragedy was played. In this contest the Baglioni proved the stronger, and began to sway the state of Perugia after the irregular fashion of Italian despots. They had no legal right over the city, no hereditary magistracy, no title of princely authority.* The Church was reckoned the supreme administrator of the Perugian commonwealth. But in reality no man could set foot on the Umbrian plain without permission from the Baglioni. They elected the officers of state. The lives and goods of the citizens were at their discretion. When a Papal legate showed his face, they made the town too hot to hold him. One of Innocent VIII.'s nephews had been murdered by them.† Another cardinal had shut himself up in a box, and sneaked on mule-back like a bale of merchandise through the gates to escape their fury. It was in vain that from time to time the people rose against them, massacring Pandolfo Baglioni on the public square in 1393, and joining with Ridolfo and Braccio of the dominant house to assassinate another Pandolfo with his son Niccolo in 1460. The

in uno solo tempo aveste homine quarantadue; e oggie, per me quale son ultimo, se asconde el nome de la magnifica e famosa casa degli Oddi, che mai al mondo non serà piu nominata" (p. 175).

* The Baglioni were lords of Spello, Bettona, Montalera, and other Umbrian burghs, but never of Perugia. Perugia had a civic constitution similar to that of Florence and other Guelf towns. The power of the eminent house was based only on wealth and prestige.

† See Matarazzo, p. 38. It is here that he relates the covert threat addressed by Guido Baglioni to Alexander VI., who was seeking to inveigle him into his clutches.

more they were cut down, the more they flourished. The wealth they derived from their lordships in the duchy of Spoleto and the Umbrian hill-cities, and the treasures they accumulated in the service of the Italian republics, made them omnipotent in their native town. There they built tall houses on the site which Paul III. chose afterwards for his *castello*, and which is now an open place above the Porta San Carlo. From the balconies and turrets of these palaces, swarming with their *bravi*, they surveyed the splendid land that felt their force—a land which even in midsummer, from sunrise to sunset keeps the light of day upon its up-turned face. And from this eyrie they issued forth to prey upon the plain, or to take their lust of love or blood within the city streets. The Baglioni spent but short time in the amusements of peace. From father to son they were warriors, and we have records of few Italian houses, except perhaps the Malatesti of Rimini, who equalled them in hardihood and fierceness. Especially were they noted for the remorseless *vendette* which they carried on among themselves, cousin tracking cousin to death with the ferocity and craft of sleuth-hounds. Had they restrained these fratricidal passions, they might, perhaps, by following some common policy, like that of the Medici in Florence or the Bentivogli in Bologna, have successfully resisted the Papal authority and secured dynastic sovereignty.

It is not until 1495 that the history of the Baglioni becomes dramatic, possibly because till then they lacked the pen of Matarazzo.* But from this year forward

* His chronicle is a masterpiece of naive, unstudied narrative. Few documents are so important for the student of the sixteenth century in Italy. Whether it be really the work of Matarazzo or Maturanzio, the distinguished humanist, is more than doubtful. The writer seems to me as yet unspoiled by classic studies and the pedantries of imitation.

to their final extinction, every detail of their doings has a picturesque and awful interest. Domestic furies, like the revel descried by Cassandra above the palace of Mycenæ, seem to take possession of the fated house; and the doom which has fallen on them is worked out with pitiless exactitude to the last generation. In 1495 the heads of the Casa Baglioni were two brothers, Guido and Ridolfo, who had a numerous progeny of heroic sons. From Guido sprang Astorre, Adriano, called for his great strength Morgante, Gismondo, Marcantonio, and Gentile. Ridolfo owned Troilo, Gianpaolo, and Simonetto. The first glimpse we get of these young athletes in Matarazzo's chronicle is on the occasion of a sudden assault upon Perugia, made by the Oddi and the exiles of their faction, in September 1495. The foes of the Baglioni entered the gates, and began breaking the iron chains, *serragli*, which barred the streets against advancing cavalry. None of the noble house were on the alert except young Simonetto, a lad of eighteen, fierce and cruel, who had not yet begun to shave his chin.* In spite of all dissuasion, he rushed forth alone, bareheaded, in his shirt, with a sword in his right hand and a buckler on his arm, and fought against a squadron. There at the barrier of the piazza he kept his foes at bay, smiting men-at-arms to the ground with the sweep of his tremendous sword, and receiving on his gentle body twenty-two cruel wounds. While thus at fearful odds, the noble Astorre mounted his charger and joined him. Upon his helmet flashed the falcon of the Baglioni with

* "Era costui al presente di anne 18 o 19; ancora non se radeva barba; e mostrava tanta forza e tanto ardire, e era tanto adatto nel fatto d'arme, che era gran maraveglia; e iostrava cum tanta gintilezza e gagliardia, che homo del mondo non l'aria mai creso; et aria dato con la punta de la lancia in nel fondo d'uno bicchiere da la mattina a la sera," &c. (p. 50.)

the dragon's tail that swept behind. Bidding Simonetto tend his wounds, he in his turn held the square. Listen to Matarazzo's description of the scene; it is as good as any piece of the "Mort Arthur:" "According to the report of one who told me what he had seen with his own eyes, never did anvil take so many blows as he upon his person and his steed; and they all kept striking at his lordship in such crowds that the one prevented the other. And so many lances, partizans, and crossbow quarries, and other weapons, made upon his body a most mighty din, that above every other noise and shout was heard the thud of those great strokes. But he, like one who had the mastery of war, set his charger where the press was thickest, jostling now one, and now another; so that he ever kept at least ten men of his foes stretched on the ground, beneath his horse's hoofs; which horse was a most fierce beast and gave his enemies what trouble he best could. And now that gentle lord was all fordone with sweat and toil, he and his charger; and so weary were they that scarcely could they any longer breathe." Soon after, the Baglioni mustered in force. One by one, their heroes rushed from the palaces. The enemy were driven back with slaughter; and a war ensued, which made the fair land between Assisi and Perugia a wilderness for many months. It must not be forgotten that, at the time of these great feats of Simonetto and Astorre, young Raphael was painting in the studio of Perugino. What the whole city witnessed with astonishment and admiration, he, the keenly sensitive artist-boy, treasured in his memory. Therefore in the St George of the Louvre, and in the mounted horseman trampling upon Heliodorus in the Stanze of the Vatican, victorious Astorre lives for ever, immortalised in all his splendour by the painter's art.

The grinning griffin on the helmet, the resistless frown upon the forehead of the beardless knight, the terrible right arm, and the ferocious steed,—all are there as Raphael saw and wrote them on his brain. One characteristic of the Baglioni, as might be plentifully illustrated from their annalist, was their eminent beauty, which inspired beholders with an enthusiasm and a love they were far from deserving by their virtues. It is this, in combination with their personal heroism, which gives a peculiarly dramatic interest to their doings, and makes the chronicle of Matarazzo more fascinating than a novel. He seems unable to write about them without using the language of an adoring lover.

In the affair of 1495 the Baglioni were at amity among themselves. When they next appear upon the scene, they are engaged in deadly feud. Cousin has set his hand to the throat of cousin, and the two heroes of the piazza are destined to be slain by foulest treachery of their own kin. It must be premised that besides the sons of Guido and Ridolfo already named, the great house counted among its most distinguished members a young Grifone, or Grifonetto, the son of Grifone and Atalanta Baglioni. Both his father and grandfather had died violent deaths in the prime of their youth; Galeotto, the father of Atalanta, by poison, and Grifone by the knife at Ponte Ricciolo in 1477. Atalanta was left a young widow with one only son, this Grifonetto, whom Matarazzo calls "un altro Ganimede," and who combined the wealth of two chief branches of the Baglioni. In 1500, when the events about to be related took place, he was quite a youth. Brave, rich, handsome, and married to a young wife, Zenobia Sforza, he was the admiration of Perugia. He and his wife loved each other dearly; and how, indeed, could it be otherwise, since "l'uno e

l'altro 'sembravano doi angioli di Paradiso"? At the same time he had fallen into the hands of bad and desperate counsellors. A bastard of the house, Filippo da Braccio, his half-uncle, was always at his side, instructing him not only in the accomplishments of chivalry, but also in wild ways that brought his name into disrepute. Another of his familiars was Carlo Barciglia Baglioni, an unquiet spirit, who longed for more power than his poverty and comparative obscurity allowed. With them associated Jeronimo della Penna, a veritable ruffian, contaminated from his earliest youth with every form of lust and violence, and capable of any crime.* These three companions, instigated partly by the Lord of Camerino and partly by their own cupidity, conceived a scheme for massacring the families of Guido and Ridolfo at one blow. As a consequence of this wholesale murder, Perugia would be at their discretion. Seeing of what use Grifonetto by his wealth and name might be to them, they did all they could to persuade him to join their conjuration. It would appear that the bait first offered him was the sovereignty of the city, but that he was at last gained over by being made to believe that his wife Zenobia had carried on an intrigue with Gianpaolo Baglioni. The dissolute morals of the family gave plausibility to an infernal trick which worked upon the jealousy of Grifonetto. Thirsting for revenge, he consented to the scheme. The conspirators were further fortified by the accession of Jeronimo della Staffa, and three members of the house of Corgna. It is noticeable

* Matarazzo's description of the ruffians who surrounded Grifonetto (pp. 104, 105, 113) would suit Webster's Flamineo or Bosola. In one place he likens Filippo to Achitophel and Grifonetto to Absalom. Villano Villani, quoted by Fabretti (vol. iii. p. 125), relates the street adventures of this clique. It is a curious picture of the pranks of an Italian princeling in the fifteenth century.

that out of the whole number only two, Bernardo da Corgna and Filippo da Braccio, were above the age of thirty. Of the rest, few had reached twenty-five. At so early an age were the men of those times adepts in violence and treason. The execution of the plot was fixed for the wedding festivities of Astorre Baglioni with Lavinia, the daughter of Giovanni Colonna and Giustina Orsini. At that time the whole Baglioni family were to be assembled in Perugia, with the single exception of Marcantonio, who was taking baths at Naples for his health. It was known that the members of the noble house, nearly all of them condottieri by trade, and eminent for their great strength and skill in arms, took few precautions for their safety. They occupied several houses close together between the Porta San Carlo and the Porta Eburnea, set no regular guard over their sleeping chambers, and trusted to their personal bravery, and to the fidelity of their attendants.* It was thought that they might be assassinated in their beds. The wedding festivities began upon the 28th of July, and great is the particularity with which Matarazzo describes the doings of each successive day — processions, jousts, triumphal arches, banquets, balls, and pageants. The night of the 14th of August was finally set apart for the consummation of *el gran tradimento:* it is thus that Matarazzo always alludes to the crime of Grifonetto with a solemnity of reiteration that is most impressive. A heavy stone let fall into the courtyard of Guido Baglioni's palace was to be the signal: each conspirator

* Jacobo Antiquari, the secretary of Lodovico Sforza, in a curious letter, which gives an account of the massacre, says that he had often reproved the Baglioni for "sleeping in their beds without any guard or watch, so that they might easily be overcome by enemies."

was then to run to the sleeping chamber of his appointed prey. Two of the principals and fifteen bravi were told off to each victim: rams and crowbars were prepared to force the doors, if needful. All happened as had been anticipated. The crash of the falling stone was heard. The conspirators rushed to the scene of operations. Astorre, who was sleeping in the house of his traitorous cousin Grifonetto, was slain in the arms of his young bride, crying, as he vainly struggled, "Misero Astorre che more come poltrone!" Simonetto, who lay that night with a lad called Paolo he greatly loved, flew to arms, exclaiming to his brother, "Non dubitare Gismondo, mio fratello!" He too was soon despatched, together with his bedfellow. Filippo da Braccio, after killing him, tore from a great wound in his side the still quivering heart, into which he drove his teeth with savage fury. Old Guido died, groaning, "Ora è gionto il ponto mio:" and Gismondo's throat was cut, while he lay holding back his face that he might be spared the sight of his own massacre. The corpses of Astorre and Simonetto were stripped and thrown out naked into the streets. Men gathered round and marvelled to see such heroic forms, with faces so proud and fierce even in death. In especial the foreign students likened them to ancient Romans.* But on their fingers were rings, and these the ruffians of the place would fain have hacked off with their knives. From this indignity the noble limbs were spared; then the dead Baglioni were hurriedly consigned to an unhonoured tomb. Meanwhile the rest of the

* "Quelli che li vidino, e maxime li forastiere studiante assimigliavano el magnifico Messer Astorre cosí morto ad un antico Romano, perchè prima era unanissimo; tanto sua figura era degnia e magnia," &c. This is a touch exquisitely illustrative of the Renaissance enthusiasm for classic culture.

intended victims managed to escape. Gianpaólo, assailed by Grifonetto and Gianfrancesco della Corgna, took refuge with his squire and bedfellow, Maraglia, upon a staircase leading from his room. While the squire held the passage with his pike against the foe, Gianpaolo effected his flight over nēighbouring house-roofs. He crept into the attic of some foreign students, who, trembling with terror, gave him food and shelter, clad him in a scholar's gown, and helped him to fly in this disguise from the gates at dawn. He then joined his brother Troilo at Marsciano, whence he returned without delay to punish the traitors. At the same time Grifonetto's mother, Atalanta, taking with her his wife Zenobia and the two young sons of Gianpaolo, Malatesta and Orazio, afterwards so celebrated in Italian history for their great feats of arms and their crimes, fled to her country-house at Landona. Grifonetto in vain sought to see her there. She drove him from her presence with curses for the treason and the fratricide that he had planned. It is very characteristic of these wild natures, framed of fierce instincts and discordant passions, that his mother's curse weighed like lead upon the unfortunate young man. Next day, when Gianpaolo returned to try the luck of arms, Grifonetto, deserted by the companions of his crime and paralysed by the sense of his guilt, went out alone to meet him on the public place. The semi-failure of their scheme had terrified the conspirators: the horrors of that night of blood unnerved them. All had fled except the next victim of the feud. Putting his sword to the youth's throat, Gianpaolo looked into his eyes and said: "Art thou here, Grifonetto? Go with God's peace: I will not slay thee, nor plunge my hand in my own blood as thou hast done in thine." Then he turned and left the

lad to be hacked in pieces by his guard. The untranslatable words which Matarazzo uses to describe his death, are touching from the strong impression they convey of Grifonetto's goodliness: "Qui ebbe sua signoria sopra sua nobile persona tante ferite che suoi membra leggiadre stese in terra." * None but Greeks felt the charm of personal beauty thus. We cannot but be reminded of Philippus, whom the Segesteans found dead among their foes and worshipped for the exceeding grace of his form. But while Grifonetto was breathing out his life upon the pavement of the piazza, his mother Atalanta and his wife Zenobia came to greet him through the awestruck city. As they approached, all men fell aside and slunk away before their grief. None would seem to have had a share in Grifonetto's murder. Then Atalanta knelt by her dying son, and ceased from wailing, and prayed and exhorted him to pardon those who had caused his death. It appears that Grifonetto was too weak to speak, but that he made a signal of assent, and received his mother's blessing at the last: "E allora porse el nobil giovenetto la dextra mano a la sua giovenile matre strengendo de sua matre la bianca mano; e poi incontinente spirò l'anima dal formoso corpo, e passò cum infinite benedizioni de sua matre in cambio de la maledictione che prima li aveva date."† Here again the style of Matarazzo, tender and full of tears, conveys the keenest sense of the pathos of beauty and of youth in death and sorrow. He has forgotten *el gran tradimento.* He only remembers how

* Here his lordship received upon his noble person so many wounds that he stretched his graceful limbs upon the earth.

† And then the noble stripling stretched his right hand to his youthful mother, pressing the white hand of his mother; and afterwards forthwith he breathed his soul forth from his beauteous body, and died with numberless blessings of his mother instead of the curses she had given him before.

comely Grifonetto was, how noble, how frank and spirited, how strong in war, how sprightly in his pleasures and his loves. And he sees the still young mother, delicate and nobly born, leaning over the athletic body of her bleeding son. This scene, which is perhaps a genuine instance of what we may call the neohellenism of the Renaissance, finds its parallel in the "Phœnissæ" of Euripides. Jocasta and Antigone have gone forth to the battle-field and found the brothers Polynices and Eteocles drenched in blood :—

> From his chest
> Heaving a heavy breath, King Eteocles heard
> His mother, and stretched forth a cold damp hand
> On hers, and nothing said, but with his eyes
> Spake to her by his tears, showing kind thoughts
> In symbols.

It was Atalanta, we may remember, who commissioned Raphael to paint the so-called Borghese Entombment. Did she perhaps feel, as she withdrew from the piazza, soaking with young Grifonetto's blood,* that she too had some portion in the sorrow of that mother who had wept for Christ? The memory of the dreadful morning must have remained with her through life, and long communion with our Lady of sorrows may have sanctified the grief that had so bitter and so shameful a root of sin.

After the death of Grifonetto, and the flight of the conspirators, Gianpaolo took possession of Perugia. All who were suspected of complicity in the treason were massacred upon the piazza and in the Cathedral. At the expense of more than a hundred murders, the chief of the Baglioni found himself master of the city on the 17th of July. First he caused the Cathedral to be washed with wine and re-consecrated. Then he decorated the

* See Matarazzo, p. 134, for this detail.

Palazzo with the heads of the traitors and with their portraits in fresco, painted hanging head downwards, as was the fashion in Italy.* Next he established himself in what remained of the palaces of his kindred, hanging the saloons with black, and arraying his retainers in the deepest mourning. Sad indeed was now the aspect of Perugia. Helpless and comparatively uninterested, the citizens had been spectators of these bloody broils. They were now bound to share the desolation of their masters. Matarazzo's description of the mournful palace and the silent town, and of the return of Marcantonio from Naples, presents a picture striking for its vividness.† In the true style of the Baglioni, Marcantonio sought to vent his sorrow not so much in tears as by new violence. He prepared and lighted torches, meaning to burn the whole quarter of Sant' Angelo; and from this design he was with difficulty dissuaded by his brother. To such mad freaks of rage and passion were the inhabitants of a mediæval town in Italy exposed! They make us understand the *ordinanze di giustizia*, by which to be a noble was a crime in Florence.

From this time forward the whole history of the Baglioni family is one of crime and bloodshed. A curse had fallen on the house, and to the last of its members the penalty was paid. Gianpaolo himself acquired the highest reputation throughout Italy for his courage and sagacity both as a general and a governor.‡ It was he who held Julius II. at his discretion in 1506, and was

* See Varchi (ed. Lemonnier, 1857), vol. ii. p. 265, vol. iii. pp. 224, 652, and Corio (Venice, 1554), p. 326, for instances of *dipinti per traditori*.

† P. 142. "Pareva ogni cosa oscura e lacrimosa: tutte loro servitore piangevano; et le camere de lo resto de li magnifici Baglioni, e sale, e ognie cosa erano tutte intorno cum pagnie negre. E per la città non era più alcuno che sonasse nè cantasse; e poco si rideva," &c.

‡ See Frolliere, p. 437, for a very curious account of his character.

sneered at by Machiavelli for not consummating his enormities by killing the warlike Pope.* He again, after joining the diet of La Magione against Cesare Borgia, escaped by his acumen the massacre of Sinigaglia, which overthrew the other conspirators. But his name was no less famous for unbridled lust and deeds of violence. He boasted that his son Costantino was a true Baglioni, since he was his sister's child. He once told Machiavelli that he had it in his mind to murder four citizens of Perugia, his enemies. He looked calmly on while his kinsmen Eusebio and Taddeo Baglioni, who had been accused of treason, were hewn to pieces by his guard. His wife, Ippolita de' Conti, was poignarded in her Roman farm; on hearing the news, he ordered a festival in which he was engaged, to proceed with redoubled merriment.† At last the time came for him to die by fraud and violence. Leo X., anxious to remove so powerful a rival from Perugia, lured him in 1520 to Rome under the false protection of a papal safe-conduct. After a short imprisonment he had him beheaded in the Castle of St Angelo. It was thought that Gentile, his first cousin, sometime Bishop of Orvieto, but afterwards the father of two sons in wedlock with Giulia Vitelli—such was the discipline of the Church at this epoch—had contributed to the capture of Gianpaolo, and had exulted in his execution.‡ If so, he paid dear for his treachery; for Orazio Baglioni, the

* Fabretti (vol. iii. pp. 193-202, and notes) discusses this circumstance in detail. Machiavelli's critique runs thus (Discorsi, lib. i. cap. 27): "Nè si poteva credere che si fosse astenuto o per bontà, o per coscienza che lo ritenesse; perchè in un petto d'un uomo facinoroso, che si teneva la sorella, ch'aveva morti i cugini e i nipoti per regnare, non poteva scendere alcuno pietoso rispetto: ma si conchiuse che gli uomini non sanno essere onorevolmente tristi, o perfettamente buoni," &c.

† See Fabretti, vol. iii. p. 230. He is an authority for the details of Gianpaolo's life.

‡ Fabretti, vol. iii. p. 230, vol. iv. p. 10.

second son of Gianpaolo and captain of the Church under Clement VII., had him murdered in 1527, together with his two nephews Fileno and Annibale.* This Orazio was one of the most bloodthirsty of the whole brood. Not satisfied with the assassination of Gentile, he stabbed Galeotto, the son of Grifonetto, with his own hand in the same year.† Afterwards he died in the kingdom of Naples while leading the Black Bands in the disastrous war which followed the sack of Rome. He left no son. Malatesta, his elder brother, became one of the most celebrated generals of the age, holding the batons of the Venetian and Florentine republics, and managing to maintain his ascendancy in Perugia in spite of the persistent opposition of successive popes. But his name is best known in history for one of the greatest public crimes—a crime which must be ranked with that of Marshal Bazaine. Intrusted with the defence of Florence during the siege of 1530, he sold the city to his enemy, Pope Clement, receiving for the price of this infamy certain privileges and immunities which fortified his hold upon Perugia for a season. All Italy was ringing with the great deeds of the Florentines, who for the sake of their liberty, transformed themselves from merchants into soldiers, and withstood the united powers of Pope and Emperor alone. Meanwhile Malatesta, whose trade was war, and who was being largely paid for his services by the beleaguered city, contrived by means of diplomatic procrastination, secret communication with the enemy, and all the arts that could intimidate an army of recruits, to push affairs to a point at which Florence was forced to capitulate, without inflicting the last desperate glorious blow she longed to deal her enemies. The universal voice of Italy condemned him.

* See Varchi Storie Florentine, vol. i. p. 224. † Ibid.

When Matteo Dandolo, the Doge of Venice, heard what he had done, he cried before the Pregadi in conclave, "He has sold that people and that city, and the blood of those poor citizens ounce by ounce, and has donned the cap of the biggest traitor in the world."* Consumed with shame, corroded by an infamous disease, and mistrustful of Clement, to whom he had sold his honour, Malatesta retired to Perugia, and died in 1531. He left one son, Ridolfo, who was unable to maintain himself in the lordship of his native city. After killing the Papal Legate, Cinzio Filonardi, in 1534, he was dislodged four years afterwards, when Paul III. took final possession of the place as an appanage of the Church, razed the houses of the Baglioni to the ground, and built upon their site the Rocca Paolina. This fortress bore an inscription: "Ad coercendam Perusinorum audaciam." The city was given over to the rapacity of the abominable Pier Luigi Farnese, and so bad was this tyranny of priests and bastards that, strange to say, the Perugians regretted the troublous times of the Baglioni. Malatesta in dying had exclaimed, "Help me, if ye can; since after me you will be set to draw the cart like oxen." Frollieri, relating the speech, adds, "And this has been fulfilled to the last letter, for all have borne not only the yoke but the burden and the goad." Ridolfo Baglioni and his cousin Braccio, the eldest son of Grifonetto, were both captains of Florence. The one died in battle in 1554, the other in 1559. Thus ended the illustrious family. They are now represented by descendants from females, and by contadini who preserve their name and boast a pedigree of which they have no records.

The history of the Baglioni needs no commentary. They were not worse than other Italian nobles, who by

* Fabretti, vol. iv. p. 206.

their passions and their parties destroyed the peace of the city they infested. It is with an odd mixture of admiration and discontent that the chroniclers of Perugia allude to their ascendancy. Matarazzo, who certainly cannot be accused of hostility to the great house, describes the miseries of his country under their bad government in piteous terms:* "As I wish not to swerve from the pure truth, I say that from the day the Oddi were expelled, our city went from bad to worse. All the young men followed the trade of arms. Their lives were disorderly; and every day divers excesses were divulged, and the city had lost all reason and justice. Every man administered right unto himself, *propriâ autoritate et manu regiâ.* Meanwhile the Pope sent many legates, if so be the city could be brought to order: but all who came, returned in dread of being hewn in pieces; for they threatened to throw some from the windows of the palace, so that no cardinal or other legate durst approach Perugia, unless he were a friend of the Baglioni. And the city was brought to such misery, that the most wrongous men were most prized; and those who had slain two or three men, walked as they listed through the palace, and went with sword or poignard to speak to the podestà and other magistrates. Moreover every man of worth was down-trodden by bravi whom the nobles favoured; nor could a citizen call his property his own. The nobles robbed first one and then another of goods and land. All offices were sold or else suppressed; and taxes and extortions were so grievous that every one cried out. And if a man were in prison for his head, he had no reason to fear death, provided he had some interest with a noble." Yet the same Matarazzo in another place finds it in his

* Pp. 102, 103.

heart to say:* "Though the city suffered great pains for these nobles, yet the illustrious house of Baglioni brought her honour throughout Italy, by reason of the great dignity and splendour of that house, and of their pomp and name. Wherefore through them our city was often set above the rest, and notably above the commonwealths of Florence and Siena." Pride feels no pain. The gratified vanity of the Perugian burgher, proud to see his town preferred before its neighbours, blinds the annalist to all the violence and villany of the magnificent Casa Baglioni. So strong was the *esprit de ville* which through successive centuries and amid all vicissitudes of politics divided the Italians against themselves, and proved an insuperable obstacle to unity.

After reading the chronicle of Matarazzo at Perugia through one winter day, I left the inn and walked at sunset to the blood-bedabbled cathedral square: for still those steps and pavements to my strained imagination seemed reeking with the outpoured blood of Baglioni; and on the ragged stonework of San Lorenzo red patches slanted from the dying day. Then by one of those strange freaks of the brain to which we are all subject, for a moment I lost sight of untidy Gothic façades and gaunt unfinished church walls; and as I walked, I was in the Close of Salisbury on a perfumed summer afternoon. The drowsy scent of lime-flowers and mignonette, the cawing of elm-cradled rooks, the hum of bees above, the velvet touch of smooth-shorn grass, and the breathless shadow of motionless green boughs made up one potent and absorbing mood of the senses. Far overhead soared the calm grey spire into the infinite air, and the perfection of accomplished beauty slept beneath in those long lines of nave and choir and

* Page 139.

transepts. It was but a momentary dream, a thought that burned itself upon a fancy overtaxed by passionate images. Once more the puppet-scene of the brain was shifted; once more I saw the bleak bare flags of the Perugian piazza, the forlorn front of the Duomo, the bronze griffin, and Pisano's fountain, with here and there a flake of that tumultuous fire which the Italian sunset sheds. Who shall adequately compare the two pictures? Which shall we prefer—the Close of Salisbury, with its sleepy bells and cushioned ease of immemorial Deans—or this poor threadbare passion of Perugia, where every stone is stained with blood, and where genius in painters and scholars and prophets and ecstatic lovers has throbbed itself away to nothingness? It would be foolish to seek an answer to this question, idle to institute a comparison, for instance, between those tall young men with their broad winter cloaks who remind me of Grifonetto, and the vergers pottering in search of shillings along the gravel paths of Salisbury. It is more rational, perhaps, to reflect of what strange stuff our souls are made in this age of the world, when æsthetic pleasures, full, genuine, and satisfying, can be communicated alike by Perugia with its fascination of a dead irrevocable dramatic past, and Salisbury, which finds the artistic climax of its English comfort in the "Angel of the house." From Matarazzo, smitten with a Greek love for the beautiful Grifonetto, to Mr Patmore, is a wide step.

ORVIETO.

ON the road from Siena to Rome, half way between Ficulle and Viterbo, is the town of Orvieto. Travellers often pass it in the night-time. Few stop there, for the place is old and dirty, and its inns are indifferent. But none who see it even from a distance can fail to be struck with its imposing aspect, as it rises from the level plain upon its mass of rock among the Apennines.

Orvieto is built upon the first of those huge volcanic blocks which are found like fossils, embedded in the more recent geological formations of Central Italy, and which stretch in an irregular but unbroken line to the Campagna of Rome. Many of them, like that on which Civita Castéllana is perched, are surrounded by rifts and chasms and ravines and fosses, strangely furrowed and twisted by the force of fiery convulsions. But their advanced guard, Orvieto, stands up definite and solid, an almost perfect cube, with walls precipitous to north and south and east, but slightly sloping to the westward. At its foot rolls the Paglia, one of those barren streams which swell in winter with the snows and rains of the Apennines, but which in summer-time shrink up, and leave bare beds of sand and pestilential canebrakes to stretch irregularly round their dwindled waters.

The weary flatness and utter desolation of this valley present a sinister contrast to the broad line of the Apennines, swelling tier on tier, from their oak-girdled

basements set with villages and towers, up to the snow and cloud that crown their topmost crags. The time to see this landscape is at sunrise; and the traveller should take his stand upon the rising ground over which the Roman road is carried from the town—the point, in fact, which Turner has selected for his vague and misty sketch of Orvieto in our Gallery. Thence he will command the whole space of the plain, the Apennines, and the river creeping in a straight line at the base; while the sun, rising to his right, will slant along the mountain flanks, and gild the leaden stream, and flood the castled crags of Orvieto with a haze of light. From the centre of this glory stand out in bold relief old bastions built upon the solid tufa, vast gaping gateways black in shadow, towers of churches shooting up above a medley of deep-corniced tall Italian houses, and, amid them all, the marble front of the Cathedral, calm and solemn in its unfamiliar Gothic state. Down to the valley from these heights there is a sudden fall; and we wonder how the few spare olive-trees that grow there can support existence on the steep slope of the cliff.

Our mind, in looking at this landscape, is irresistibly carried to Jerusalem. We could fancy ourselves to be standing on Mount Olivet, with the valley of Jehoshaphat between us and the Sacred City. As we approach the town, the difficulty of scaling its crags seems insurmountable. The road, though carried skilfully along each easy slope or ledge of quarried rock, still winds so much that nearly an hour is spent in the ascent. Those who can walk should take a footpath, and enter Orvieto by the mediæval road, up which many a Pope, flying from rebellious subjects or foreign enemies, has hurried on his mule.*

* Clement VII., for example, escaped from Rome disguised as a gardener

To unaccustomed eyes there is something sinister and terrible about the black and cindery appearance of volcanic tufa. Where it is broken, the hard and gritty edges leave little space for vegetation; while at intervals the surface spreads so smooth and straight that one might take it for solid masonry erected by the architect of Pandemonium. Rubbish and shattered bits of earthenware and ashes, thrown from the city walls, cling to every ledge and encumber the broken pavement of the footway. Then as we rise, the castle battlements above appear more menacing, toppling upon the rough edge of the crag, and guarding each turn of the road with jealous loopholes or beetle-browed machicolations, until at last the gateway and portcullis are in view.

On first entering Orvieto, one's heart fails to find so terrible a desolation, so squalid a solitude, and so vast a difference between the present and the past, between the beauty of surrounding nature and the misery of this home of men. A long space of unoccupied ground intervenes between the walls and the hovels which skirt the modern town. This, in the times of its splendour, may have served for oliveyards, vineyards, and pasturage, in case of siege. There are still some faint traces of dead gardens left upon its arid wilderness, among the ruins of a castellated palace, decorated with the cross-keys and tiara of an unremembered pope. But now it lies a mere tract of scorched grass, insufferably hot and dry and sandy, intersected by dirty paths, and covered with the loathliest offal of a foul Italian town. Should you

after the sack in 1527, and to quote the words of Varchi (St Fior, v. 17), "Entrò agli otto di dicembre a due ore di notte in Orvieto, terra di sito fortissimo, per lo essere ella sopra uno scoglio pieno di tufi posta, d'ogni intorno scosceso e dirupato," &c.

cross this ground at mid-day, under the blinding sun, when no living thing, except perhaps some poisonous reptile, is about, you would declare that Orvieto had been stricken for its sins by heaven. Your mind would dwell mechanically on all that you have read of Papal crimes, of fratricidal wars, of Pagan abominations in the high places of the Church, of tempestuous passions and refined iniquity—of everything, in fact, which renders Italy of the middle ages and the Renaissance dark and ominous amid the splendours of her art and civilisation. This is the natural result; this shrunken and squalid old age of poverty and self-abandonment is the end of that strong, prodigal, and vicious youth. Who shall restore vigour to these dead bones? we cry. If Italy is to live again, she must quit her ruined palace towers to build fresh dwellings elsewhere. Filth, lust, rapacity, treason, godlessness, and violence have made their habitation here; ghosts haunt these ruins; these streets still smell of blood and echo to the cries of injured innocence; life cannot be pure, or calm, or healthy, where this curse has settled.

Occupied with such reflections, we reach the streets of Orvieto. They are not very different from those of most Italian villages, except that there is little gaiety about them. Like Assisi or Siena, Orvieto is too large for its population, and merriment flows better from close crowding than from spacious accommodation. Very dark, and big, and dirty, and deserted, is the judgment we pronounce upon the houses; very filthy and malodorous each passage; very long this central street; very few and sad and sullen the inhabitants; and where, we wonder, is the promised inn? In search of this one walks nearly through the city, until one enters the

Piazza, where there is more liveliness. Here cafés may be found; soldiers, strong and sturdy, from the north, lounge at the corners; the shops present more show; and a huge hotel, not bad for such a place, and appropriately dedicated to the Belle Arti, standing in a courtyard of its own, receives the traveller weary with his climb. As soon as he has taken rooms, his first desire is to go forth and visit the Cathedral.

The great Duomo was erected at the end of the thirteenth century to commemorate the Miracle of Bolsena. The value of this miracle consisted in its establishing unmistakably the truth of transubstantiation. The story runs that a young Bohemian priest who doubted the dogma was performing the office of the mass in a church at Bolsena, when, at the moment of consecration, blood issued from five gashes in the wafer, which resembled the five wounds of Christ. The fact was evident to all the worshippers, who saw blood falling on the linen of the altar; and the young priest no longer doubted, but confessed the miracle, and journeyed straightway with the evidence thereof to Pope Urban IV. The Pope, who was then at Orvieto, came out with all his retinue to meet the convert and do honour to the magic-working relics. The circumstances of this miracle are well known to students of art through Raphael's celebrated fresco in the Stanze of the Vatican. And it will be remembered by the readers of ecclesiastical history that Urban had in 1264 promulgated by a bull the strict observance of the Corpus Christi festival in connection with his strong desire to re-establish the doctrine of Christ's presence in the elements. Nor was it without reason that, while seeking miraculous support for this dogma, he should have

treated the affair of Bolsena so seriously as to celebrate it by the erection of one of the most splendid cathedrals in Italy; for the peace of the Church had recently been troubled by the reforming ardour of the Fraticelli and by the promulgation of Abbot Joachim's Eternal Gospel. This new evangelist had preached the doctrine of progression in religious faith, proclaiming a kingdom of the Spirit which should transcend the kingdom of the Son, even as the Christian dispensation had superseded the Jewish supremacy of the Father. Nor did he fail at the same time to attack the political and moral abuses of the Papacy, attributing its degradation to the want of vitality which pervaded the old Christian system, and calling on the clergy to lead more simple and regenerate lives, consistently with the spiritual doctrine which he had received by inspiration. The theories of Joachim were immature and crude; but they were among the first signs of that liberal effort after self-emancipation which eventually stirred all Europe at the time of the Renaissance. It was, therefore, the obvious policy of the Popes to crush so dangerous an opposition while they could; and by establishing the dogma of transubstantiation, they were enabled to satisfy the growing mysticism of the people, while they placed upon a firmer basis the cardinal support of their own religious power.

In pursuance of his plan, Urban sent for Lorenzo Maitani, the great Sienese architect, who gave designs for a Gothic church in the same style as the Cathedral of Siena, though projected on a smaller scale. Fergusson, in his "Handbook of Architecture," remarks that these two churches "are perhaps, taken altogether, the most successful specimens of Italian pointed Gothic." The Gottico Tedesco had never been received with favour in

Italy. Remains of Roman architecture, then far more numerous and perfect than they are at present, controlled the minds of artists, and induced them to adopt the rounded rather than the pointed arch. Indeed, there would seem to be something peculiarly Northern in the spirit of Gothic architecture: its intricacies suit the gloom of Northern skies, its massive exterior is adapted to the severity of Northern weather, its vast windows catch the fleeting sunlight of the North, and the pinnacles and spires which constitute its beauty are better expressed in rugged stone than in the marbles of the South. Northern cathedrals do not depend for their effect upon the advantages of sunlight or picturesque situations. Many of them are built upon broad plains, over which for more than half the year hangs fog. But the cathedrals of Italy owe their charm to colour and brilliancy: their gilded sculpture and mosaics, the variegated marbles and shallow portals of their façades, the light aerial elegance of their campanili, are all adapted to the luminous atmosphere of a smiling land, where changing effects of natural beauty distract the attention from solidity of design and permanence of grandeur in the edifice itself.*

* In considering why Gothic architecture took so little root in mediæval Italy, we must remember that the Italians had maintained an unbroken connection with Pagan Rome, and that many of their finest churches were basilicas appropriated to Christian rites. Add to this that the commerce of their cities, which first acquired wealth in the twelfth century, especially Pisa and Venice, kept them in communication with the Levant, where they admired the masterpieces of Byzantine architecture, and whence they imported Greek artists in mosaic and stonework. Against these external circumstances, taken in connection with the hereditary leanings of an essentially Latin race, and with the natural conditions of landscape and climate alluded to above, the influence of a few imported German architects could not have had sufficient power to effect a thorough metamorphosis of the national taste.

The Cathedral of Orvieto will illustrate these remarks. Its design is very simple. It consists of a parallelogram, from which three chapels of equal size project, one at the east end, and one at the north and south. The windows are small and narrow, the columns round, and the roof displays none of that intricate groining we find in English churches. The beauty of the interior depends on surface decoration, on marble statues, woodwork, and fresco-paintings. Outside, there is the same simplicity of design, the same elaborated local ornament. The sides of the Cathedral are austere, their narrow windows cutting horizontal lines of black and white marble. But the façade is a triumph of decorative art. It is strictly what Fergusson has styled a "frontispiece;" for it bears no relation whatever to the construction of the building. Its three gables rise high above the aisles. Its pinnacles and parapets and turrets are stuck on to look agreeable. It is a screen such as might be completed or left unfinished at will by the architect. Finished as it is, the façade of Orvieto is a wilderness of beauties. Its pure white marble has been mellowed by time to a rich golden hue, in which are set mosaics shining like gems or pictures of enamel. A statue stands on every pinnacle; each pillar has a different design; round some of them are woven wreaths of vine and ivy; acanthus-leaves curl over the capitals, making nests for singing-birds or Cupids; the doorways are a labyrinth of intricate designs, in which the utmost elegance of form is made more beautiful by incrustations of precious agates and Alexandrine glasswork. On every square inch of this wonderful façade have been lavished invention, skill, and precious material. But its chief interest centres in the sculptures executed by

Giovanni and Andrea, sons and pupils of Nicola Pisano. The names of these three men mark an era in the history of art. They first rescued Italian sculpture from the grotesqueness of the Lombard and the wooden monotony of the Byzantine styles. Sculpture takes the lead of all the arts. And Nicola Pisano, before Cimabue, before Duccio, even before Dante, opened the gates of beauty, which for a thousand years had been shut up and overgrown with weeds. As Dante invoked the influence of Virgil when he began to write his mediæval poem, and made a heathen bard his hierophant in Christian mysteries, just so did Nicola Pisano draw inspiration from a Greek sarcophagus, which had been cast upon the shore at Pisa. He studied the bas-relief of Phædra and Hippolytus, which may still be seen upon the tomb of Countess Beatrice, in the Campo Santo, and so learned by heart the beauty of its lines, and the dignity expressed in its figures, that in all his subsequent works we trace the elevated tranquillity of Greek sculpture. This imitation never degenerated into servile copying; nor, on the other hand, did Nicola attain the perfect grace of an Athenian artist. He remained a truly mediæval carver, animated with a Christian, instead of a Pagan spirit, but caring for the loveliness of form which art in the dark ages failed to realise.

Whether it was Nicola or his sons who designed the bas-reliefs at Orvieto is of little consequence. Vasari ascribes them to the father; but we know that he completed his pulpit at Pisa in 1230, and his death is supposed to have taken place fifteen years before the foundation of the Cathedral. At any rate, they are imbued with his genius, and bear the strongest affinity

to his sculptures at Pisa, Siena, and Bologna. To estimate the influence they exercised over the arts of sculpture and painting in Italy would be a difficult task. Duccio and Giotto studied here; Ghiberti closely followed them. Signorelli and Raphael made drawings from their compositions. And the spirit which pervades these sculptures may be traced in all succeeding works of art. It is not classic; it is modern, though embodied in a form of beauty modelled on the Greek.

The bas-reliefs are carved on four marble tablets placed beside the porches of the church, and corresponding in size and shape with the chief doorways. They represent the course of Biblical history, beginning with the creation of the world, and ending with the last judgment. If it were possible here to compare them in detail with the similar designs of Ghiberti, Michel Angelo, and Raphael, it might be shown that the Pisani established modes of treating sacred subjects from which those mighty masters never deviated, though each stamped upon them his peculiar genius, making them more perfect as time added to the power of art. It would also be not without interest to show that in their primitive conceptions of the earliest events in history, the works of the Pisan artists closely resemble some sculptures executed on the walls of Northern cathedrals, as well as early mosaics in the south of Italy. We might have noticed how all the grotesque elements which appear in Nicola Pisano, and which may still be traced in Ghiberti, are entirely lost in Michel Angelo, how the supernatural is humanised, how the symbolical receives an actual expression, and how intellectual types are substituted for mere local and individual representations. For instance, the Pisani represent the

Creator as a young man, standing on the earth; with a benign and dignified expression, and attended by two ministering angels. He is the Christ of the Creed, "by whom all things were made." In Ghiberti we find an older man, sometimes appearing in a whirlwind of clouds and attendant spirits, sometimes walking on the earth, but still far different in conception from the Creative Father of Michel Angelo. The latter is rather the Platonic Demiurgus than the Mosaic God. By every line and feature of his face and flowing hair, by each movement of his limbs, whether he ride on clouds between the waters and the firmament, or stand alone creating by a glance and by a motion of his hand Eve, the full-formed and conscious woman, he is proclaimed the Maker who from all eternity has held the thought of the material universe within his mind. Raphael does not depart from this conception. The profound abstraction of Michel Angelo ruled his intellect, and received from his genius a form of perhaps greater grace. A similar growth from the germinal designs of the Pisani may be traced in many groups.

But we must not linger at the gate. Let us enter the Cathedral and see some of the wonders it contains. Statues of gigantic size adorn the nave. Of these the most beautiful are the work of Ippolito Scalza, an artist whom Orvieto claims with pride as one of her own sons. The long line of saints and apostles whom they represent, conduct us to the high altar surrounded by its shadowy frescoes, and gleaming with the work of carvers in marble and bronze and precious metals. But our steps are drawn toward the chapel of the south transept, where now a golden light from the autumnal sunset falls across a crowd of worshippers. From far and

near the poor people are gathered. Most of them are women. They kneel upon the pavement and the benches, sunburnt faces from the vineyards and the canebrakes of the valley. The old look prematurely aged and withered — their wrinkled cheeks bound up in scarlet and orange-coloured kerchiefs, their skinny fingers fumbling on the rosary, and their mute lips moving in prayer. The younger women have great listless eyes and large limbs used to labour. Some of them carry babies trussed up in tight swaddling-clothes. One kneels beside a dark-browed shepherd, on whose shoulder falls his shaggy hair; and little children play about, half hushed, half heedless of the place, among old men whose life has dwindled down into a ceaseless round of prayers. We wonder why this chapel, alone in the empty Cathedral, is so crowded with worshippers. They surely are not turned towards that splendid Pietà of Scalza—a work in which the marble seems to live a cold, dead, shivering life. They do not heed Angelico's and Signorelli's frescoes on the roof and walls. The interchange of light and gloom upon the stalls and carved work of the canopies can scarcely rivet so intense a gaze. All eyes seem fixed upon a curtain of red silk above the altar. Votive pictures, and glass cases full of silver hearts, wax babies, hands and limbs of every kind, are hung around it. A bell rings. A jingling organ plays a little melody in triple time; and from the sacristy comes forth the priest. With much reverence, and with a show of preparation, he and the acolytes around him mount the altar steps, and pull a string which draws the curtain. Behind the curtain we behold Madonna and her child—a faint, old, ugly picture, blackened with the smoke and incense of five hundred years, a wonder-

working image, cased in gold, and guarded from the common air by glass and draperies. Jewelled crowns are stuck upon the heads of the mother and the infant. In the efficacy of Madonna di San Brizio to ward off agues, to deliver from the pangs of childbirth or the fury of the storm, to keep the lover's troth and make the husband faithful to his home, these pious women of the marshes and the mountains put a simple trust.

While the priest sings, and the people pray to the dance-music of the organ, let us take a quiet seat unseen, and picture to our minds how the chapel looked when Angelico and Signorelli stood before its plastered walls, and thought the thoughts with which they covered them. Four centuries have gone by since those walls were white and even to their brushes; and now you scarce can see the golden aureoles of saints, the vast wings of the angels, and the flowing robes of prophets through the gloom. Angelico came first, in monk's dress, kneeling before he climbed the scaffold to paint the angry Judge, the Virgin crowned, the white-robed army of the Martyrs, and the glorious company of the Apostles. These he placed upon the roof, expectant of the Judgment. Then he passed away, and Luca Signorelli, the rich man who "lived splendidly and loved to dress himself in noble clothes," the liberal and courteous gentleman, took his place upon the scaffold. For all the worldliness of his attire and the delicacy of his living, his brain teemed with stern and terrible thoughts. He searched the secrets of sin and of the grave, of destruction and of resurrection, of heaven and hell. All these he has painted on the walls beneath the saints of Fra Angelico. First come the troubles of the last days, the preaching

of Antichrist, and the confusion of the wicked. In the next compartment we see the Resurrection from the tomb; and side by side with that is painted Hell. Paradise occupies another portion of the chapel.

Look at the "Fulminati"—so the group of wicked men are called whose death precedes the judgment. Huge naked angels, sailing upon vanlike wings, breathe columns of red flame upon a crowd of wicked men and women. In vain these sinners avoid the descending fire. It pursues and fells them to the earth. As they fly, their eyes are turned towards the dreadful faces in the air. Some hurry through a portico, huddled together, falling men, and women clasping to their arms dead babies scorched with flame. One old man stares straight forward, doggedly awaiting death. One woman scowls defiance as she dies. A youth has twisted both hands in his hair, and presses them against his ears, to drown the screams and groans and roaring thunder. They trample upon prostrate forms already stiff. Every shape and attitude of sudden terror and despairing guilt are here. Next comes the Resurrection. Two angels of the judgment—gigantic figures, with the plumeless wings that Signorelli loves—are seen upon the clouds. They blow trumpets with all their might; so that each naked muscle seems strained to make the blast, which bellows through the air, and shakes the sepulchres beneath the earth. Thence rise the dead. All are naked, and a few are seen like skeletons. With painful effort they struggle from the soil that clasps them round, as if obeying an irresistible command. Some have their heads alone above the ground. Others wrench their limbs from the clinging earth; and as each man rises,

it closes under him. One would think that they were being born again from solid clay, and growing into form with labour. The fully risen spirits stand and walk about, all occupied with the expectation of the judgment; but those that are in the act of rising, have no thought but for the strange and toilsome process of this second birth. Signorelli here, as elsewhere, proves himself one of the greatest painters by the simple means with which he produces the most marvellous effects. His composition sways our souls with all the passion of the terrible scenes that he depicts. Yet what does it contain? Two stern angels on the clouds, a blank grey plain, and a multitude of naked men and women. In the next compartment Hell is painted. This is a complicated picture, consisting of a mass of human beings entangled with torturing fiends. Above hover demons, bearing damned spirits, and three angels see that justice takes its course. Signorelli here degenerates into no mediæval ugliness and mere barbarity of form. His fiends are not the bestial creatures of Pisano's bas-reliefs, but models of those monsters which Duppa has engraved from Michel Angelo's "Last Judgment"—lean naked men, in whose hollow eyes glow the fires of hate and despair, whose nails have grown to claws, and from whose ears have started horns. They sail upon bats' wings; and only by their livid hue, which changes from yellow to the ghastliest green, and by the cruelty of their remorseless eyes, can you know them from the souls they torture. In Hell ugliness and power of mischief come with length of years. Continual growth in crime distorts the form which once was human; and the interchange of everlasting hatred degrades the tormentor and his victim to the same demoniac ferocity.

To this design the science of foreshortening, and the profound knowledge of the human form in every posture, give its chief interest. Paradise is not less wonderful. Signorelli has contrived to throw variety and grace into the somewhat monotonous groups which this subject requires. Above are choirs of angels, not like Fra Angelico's, but tall male creatures clothed in voluminous drapery, with grave features and still, solemn eyes. Some are dancing, some are singing to the lute, and one, the most gracious of them all, bends down to aid a suppliant soul. The men beneath, who listen in a state of bliss, are all undraped. Signorelli, in this difficult composition, remains temperate, serene, and simple; a Miltonic harmony pervades the movement of his angelic choirs. Their beauty is the product of their strength and virtue. No floral ornaments or cherubs, or soft clouds, are found in his Paradise. Yet it is fair and full of grace. Here Luca seems to have anticipated Raphael.

After viewing these frescoes, we muse and ask ourselves why Signorelli's fame is so inadequate to his deserts? Partly, no doubt, because he painted in obscure Italian towns, and left few easel-pictures.*

*The Uffizzi Gallery at Florence contains one or two fine specimens of Luca Signorelli's Holy Families, which show his influence over the early manner of Michel Angelo. Into the background of one circular picture he has introduced a group of naked figures, which was imitated by Buonarotti in the Holy Family of the Tribune. The Accademia has also a picture of saints and angels illustrative of his large style and crowded composition. But perhaps the most interesting of his works out of Orvieto are those in his native place, Cortona. In the church of the Gesù in that town there is an altar-piece representing Madonna in glory with saints, which also contains on a smaller scale than the principal figures a little design of the Temptation in Eden. You recognise the master's individuality in the muscular and energetic Adam.

Besides, the artists of the sixteenth century eclipsed all their predecessors, and the name of Signorelli has been swallowed up in that of Michel Angelo. Vasari said that "esso Michel Angelo imitò l'andar di Luca, come può vedere ognuno." Nor is it hard to see that what the one began at Orvieto the other completed in the Vatican. These great men had truly kindred spirits. Both struggled to express their intellectual conceptions in the simplest and most abstract forms. The works of both are distinguished by contempt for adventitious ornaments and for the grace of positive colour. Both chose to work in fresco, and selected subjects of the gravest and most elevated character. The study of anatomy, and the correct drawing of the naked body, which Luca practised, were carried to

The Duomo has a Communion of the Apostles which shows Signorelli's independence of tradition. It is the Cenacolo treated with freedom. Christ stands in the midst of the twelve, who are gathered around him, some kneeling and some upright, upon a marble pavement. The whole scene is conceived in a truly grand style—noble attitudes, broad draperies, sombre and rich colouring, masculine massing of the figures in effective groups. The Christ is especially noble. Swaying a little to the right, he gives the bread to a kneeling apostle. The composition is marked by a dignity and self-restraint which Raphael might have envied. San Niccolo again has a fine picture by this master. It is a Deposition with saints and angels—those large-limbed and wide-winged messengers of God whom none but Signorelli realised. The composition of this picture is hazardous, and at first sight it is even displeasing. The figures seem roughly scattered in a vacant space. The dead Christ has but little dignity, and the passion of St Jerome in the foreground is stiff in spite of its exaggeration. But long study only serves to render this strange picture more and more attractive. Especially noticeable is the youthful angel clad in dark green who sustains Christ. He is a young man in the bloom of strength and beauty, whose long golden hair falls on each side of a sublimely lovely face. Nothing in painting surpasses the modelling of the vigorous but delicate left arm stretched forward to support the heavy corpse. This figure is conceived and executed in a style worthy of the Orvietan frescoes. Signorelli, for whose imagination angels had a special charm, has shown here

perfection by Michel Angelo. Sublimity of thought and self-restraint pervade their compositions. He who would understand Buonarotti, must first appreciate Signorelli. The latter, it is true, was confined to a narrower circle in his study of the beautiful and the sublime. He had not ascended to that pure idealism superior to all the accidents of place and time, which is the chief distinction of Michel Angelo's work. At the same time, his manner had not suffered from too close a study of the antique. He painted the life he saw around him, and clothed his men and women in the dress of Italy.

Such reflections, and many more, pass through our mind as we sit and ponder in the chapel, which the daylight has deserted. The country-people are still

that his too frequent contempt for grace was not the result of insensibility to beauty. Strength is the parent of sweetness in this wonderful winged youth. But not a single sacrifice is made in the whole picture to mere elegance. Cortona is a place which, independently of Signorelli, well deserves a visit. Like all Etruscan towns, it is perched on the top of a high hill, whence it commands a wonderful stretch of landscape—Radicofani and Montepulciano to the south, Chiusi with its lake, the lake of Thrasymene, and the whole broad Tuscan plain. The city itself is built on a projecting buttress of the mountain, to which it clings so closely that, in climbing to the terrace of Stª Margarita, you lose sight of all but a few towers and house-roofs. One can almost fancy that Signorelli gained his broad and austere style from the habitual contemplation of a view so severe in outline, and so vacant in its width. This landscape has none of the variety which distinguishes the prospect from Perugia, none of the suavity of Siena. It is truly sympathetic in its bare simplicity to the style of the great painter of Cortona. Try to see it on a winter morning, when the mists are lying white and low and thin upon the plain, when distant hills rise islanded into the air, and the outlines of lakes are just discernible through fleecy haze. Arezzo, it may be added in conclusion, has two altar-pieces of Signorelli's in its Pinacoteca, neither of which add much to our conception of this painter's style. Noticeable as they may be among the works of that period, they prove that his genius was hampered by the narrow and traditional treatment imposed on him in pictures of this kind.

on their knees, still careless of the frescoed forms around them, still praying to Madonna of the Miracles. The service is wellnigh done. The benediction has been given, the organist strikes up his air of Verdi, and the congregation shuffles off, leaving the dimly-lighted chapel for the vast sonorous dusky nave. How strange it is to hear that faint strain of a feeble opera sounding where, a short while since, the trumpet-blast of Signorelli's angels seemed to thrill our ears!

POPULAR SONGS OF TUSCANY.

IT is a noticeable fact about the popular songs of Tuscany that they are almost exclusively devoted to love. The Italians in general have no ballad literature resembling that of our Border or that of Spain. The tragic histories of their noble families, the great deeds of their national heroes, and the sufferings of their country during centuries of warfare, have left but few traces in their rustic poetry. It is true that some districts are less utterly barren than others in these records of the past. The Sicilian people's poetry, for example, preserve a memory of the famous Vespers; and one or two terrible stories of domestic tragedy, like the romance of the Baronessa di Carini, and the so-called Caso di Sciacca, may still be heard upon the lips of the people. But these exceptions are insignificant in comparison with the vast mass of songs which deal with love; and I cannot find that Tuscany, where the language of this minstrelsy is purest, and where the artistic instincts of the race are strongest, has anything at all approaching to our ballads. Though the Tuscan contadini are always singing, it never happens that

> "The plaintive numbers flow
> For old, unhappy, far-off things,
> And battles long ago."

On the contrary, we may be sure, when we hear their

voices ringing through the olive-groves or macchi, that they are chanting

> "Some more humble lay,
> Familiar matter of to-day,—
> Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
> That has been, and may be again;"

or else, since their melodies are by no means uniformly sad, some ditty of the joyousness of spring-time or the ecstasy of love. This defect of anything corresponding to our ballads of "Chevy Chase," or "Sir Patrick Spens," or "Gil Morrice," in a poetry which is still so vital with the life of past centuries, is all the more remarkable because Italian history is distinguished above that of other nations by tragic episodes peculiarly suited to poetic treatment. Many of these received commemoration in the fourteenth century from Dante; others were embodied in the *novelle* of Boccaccio and Cinthio and Bandello, whence they passed into the dramas of Shakspere, Webster, Ford, and their contemporaries. But scarcely an echo can be traced through all the volumes of the recently collected popular songs. We must seek for an explanation of this fact partly in the conditions of Italian life, and partly in the nature of the Italian imagination. Nowhere in Italy do we observe that intimate connection between the people at large and the great nobles which generates the sympathy of clanship. Politics in most parts of the peninsula fell at a very early period into the hands either of irresponsible princes, who ruled like despots, or else of burghers, who administered the state within the walls of their Palazzo Pubblico. The people remained passive spectators of contemporary history. The loyalty of subjects to their sovereign which animates the Spanish ballads, the loyalty of retainers to their chief which gives life to the tragic ballads of the Border, did not exist in

Italy. Country-folk felt no interest in the doings of Visconti or Medici or Malatesti sufficient to arouse the enthusiasm of local bards, or to call forth the celebration of their princely tragedies in verse. Amid the miseries of foreign wars and home oppression, it seemed better to demand from verse and song some mitigation of the woes of life, some expression of personal emotion, than to record the disasters which to us at a distance appear poetic in their grandeur. These conditions of popular life, although unfavourable to the production of ballad poetry, would not, however, have been sufficient by themselves to check its growth, if the Italians had been strongly impelled to literature of this type by their nature. The real reason why their *Volkslieder* are amorous and personal is to be found in the quality of their imagination. The Italian genius is not imaginative in the highest sense. The Italians have never, either in the ancient or the modern age, produced a great drama or a national epic, the "Æneid" and the "Divine Comedy" being obviously of different species from the "Iliad" or the "Niebelungen Lied." They shrink, for the most part, in their poetry, from the representation of what is tragic and spirit-stirring. They incline to what is cheerful, brilliant, or pathetic. The dramatic element in human life, external to the personality of the poet, which exercised so strong a fascination over our ballad-bards and playwrights, has but little attraction for the Italian. When he sings, he seeks to express his own individual emotions—his love, his joy, his jealousy, his anger, his despair. The language which he uses is at the same time direct in its intensity, and hyperbolical in its display of fancy; but it lacks those imaginative touches which exalt the poetry of personal passion into a sublimer region. Again, the Italians are deficient in a

sense of the supernatural. The wraiths that cannot rest because their love is still unsatisfied, the voices which cry by night over field and fell, the water-spirits and forest fairies, the second-sight of coming woes, the presentiment of death, the warnings and the charms and spells, which fill the popular poetry of all northern nations, are absent in Italian songs. In the whole of Tigri's collection I only remember one mention of a ghost. It is not that the Italians are deficient in superstitions of all kinds. Every one has heard of their belief in the evil eye, for instance. But they do not connect this kind of fetichism with their poetry; and even their greatest poets, with the exception of Dante, have shown no capacity or no inclination for enhancing the imaginative effect of their creations by an appeal to the instinct of mysterious awe. The truth is that the Italians as a race are distinguished as much by a firm grasp upon the practical realities of existence, as by powerful emotions. They have but little of that dreamy *Schwärmerei* with which the people of the north are largely gifted. The true sphere of their genius is painting. What appeals to the imagination through the eyes they have expressed far better than any other modern nation. But their poetry, like their music, is deficient in tragic sublimity and in all the higher qualities of imaginative creation. It may seem paradoxical to say this of the nation which produced Dante. But we must remember not to judge races by single and exceptional men of genius. Petrarch, the Troubadour of exquisite emotions, Boccaccio, who touches all the keys of life so lightly, Ariosto, with the smile of everlasting April on his lips, and Tasso, excellent alone when he confines himself to pathos or the picturesque, are no exceptions to what I have just said. Yet these poets pursued their

art with conscious purpose. The tragic splendour of Greece, the majesty of Rome, were not unknown to them. Far more is it true that popular poetry in Italy, proceeding from the hearts of uncultivated peasants and expressing the national character in its simplicity, displays none of the stuff from which the greatest works of art in verse, epics and dramas, can be wrought. But within its own sphere of personal emotion, this popular poetry is exquisitely melodious, inexhaustibly rich, unique in modern literature for the direct expression which it has given to every shade of passion.

Signor Tigri's collection,* to which I shall confine my attention in this paper, consists of eleven hundred and eighty-five *rispetti*, with the addition of four hundred and sixty-one *stornelli*. Rispetto, it may be said in passing, is the name commonly given throughout Italy to short poems, varying from six to twelve lines, constructed on the principle of the octave stanza. That is to say, the first part of the rispetto consists of four or six lines with alternate rhymes, while one or more couplets complete the poem. The stornello, or ritournelle, never exceeds three lines, and owes its name to the return which it makes at the end of the last line to the rhyme given by the emphatic word of the first. Browning, in his poem of Fra Lippo Lippi, has accustomed English ears to one common species of the stornello,† which sets out with the name of a flower, and rhymes with it, as thus :—

"Fior di narciso.
Prigionero d'amore mi son reso,
Nel rimirare il tuo leggiadro viso."

* Canti Popolari Toscani, raccolti e annotati da Giuseppe Tigri. Volume unico. Firenze, G. Barbèra, 1869.

† This song, called Ciure (Sicilian for *fiore*) in Sicily, is said by Signor Pitré to be in disrepute there. He once asked an old dame of

The divisions of those two sorts of songs, to which Tigri gives names like The Beauty of Women, The Beauty of Men, Falling in Love, Serenades, Happy Love, Unhappy Love, Parting, Absence, Letters, Return to Home, Anger and Jealousy, Promises, Entreaties and Reproaches, Indifference, Treachery and Abandonment, prove with what fulness the various phases of the tender passion are treated. Through the whole fifteen hundred the one theme of Love is never relinquished. Only two persons, "I" and "thou," appear upon the scene; yet so fresh and so various are the moods of feeling that one can read them from first to last without too much satiety.

To seek for the authors of these ditties would be useless. Some of them may be as old as the fourteenth century; others may have been made yesterday. Some are the native product of the Tuscan mountain villages, especially of the regions round Pistoja and Siena, where on the spurs of the Apennines the purest Italian is vernacular. Some, again, are importations from other provinces, caught up by the peasants of Tuscany and adapted to their taste and style; for nothing travels faster than a *Volkslied.* Born some morning in a noisy street of Naples, or on the solitary slopes of Radicofani, before the week is out, a hundred voices are repeating it. Waggoners and pedlars carry it across the hills to distant towns. It floats with the fishermen from bay to bay, and marches with the conscript to his barrack in a far-off province. Who was the first to give it shape and form? No one asks, and no one cares. A student well

Palermo to repeat him some of these ditties. Her answer was: "You must get them from light women; I do not know any. They sing them in bad houses and prisons, where, God be praised, I have never been." In Tuscany there does not appear to be so marked a distinction between the flower-song and the rispetto.

acquainted with the habits of the people in these matters, says, "If they knew the author of a ditty, they would not learn it, far less if they discovered that it was a scholar's." If the cadence takes their ear, they consecrate the song at once by placing it upon the honoured list of "ancient lays." Passing from lip to lip and from district to district, it receives additions and alterations, and becomes the property of a score of provinces. Meanwhile the poet from whose soul it blossomed that first morning like a flower, remains contented with obscurity. The wind has carried from his lips the thistle-down of song, and sown it on a hundred hills and meadows, far and wide. After such wise is the birth of all truly popular compositions. Who knows, for instance, the veritable author of many of those mighty German chorals which sprang into being at the period of the Reformation? The first inspiration was given, probably, to a single mind; but the melody, as it has reached us, is the product of a thousand. This accounts for the variations which in different dialects and districts the same song presents. Meanwhile it is sometimes possible to trace the authorship of a ballad with marked local character to an improvisatore famous in his village, or to one of those professional rhymesters whom the country-folk employ in the composition of love-letters to their sweethearts at a distance. Tommaseo, in the preface to his Canti Popolari, mentions in particular a Beatrice di Pian degli Ontani, whose poetry was famous through the mountains of Pistoja; and Tigri records by name a little girl called Cherubina, who made rispetti by the dozen as she watched her sheep upon the hills. One of the songs in his collection (page 181) contains a direct reference to the village letter-writer:—

"Salutatemi, bella, lo scrivano;
Non lo conosco e non so chi si sia.
A me mi pare un poeta sovrano,
Tanto gli è sperto nella poesia."

While I am writing thus about the production and dissemination of these love-songs, I cannot help remembering three days and nights which I once spent at sea between Genoa and Palermo, in the company of some conscripts who were going to join their regiment in Sicily. They were lads from the Milanese and Liguria, and they spent a great portion of their time in composing and singing poetry. One of them had a fine baritone voice; and when the sun had set, his comrades gathered round him and begged him to sing to them "Con quella patetica tua voce." Then followed hours of singing, the low monotonous melodies of his ditties harmonising wonderfully with the tranquillity of night, so clear and calm that the sky and all its stars were mirrored on the sea, through which we moved as if in a dream. Sometimes the songs provoked conversation, which, as is usual in Italy, turned mostly upon "le bellezze delle donne." I remember that once an animated discussion about the relative merits of blondes and brunettes nearly ended in a quarrel, when the youngest of the whole band, a boy of about seventeen, put a stop to the dispute by theatrically raising his eyes and arms to heaven and crying, "Tu sei innamorato d'una grande Diana cacciatrice nera, ed io d'una bella Venere bionda." Though they were but village lads, they supported their several opinions with arguments not unworthy of Firenzuola, and showed the greatest delicacy of feeling in the treatment of a subject which could scarcely have failed to reveal any latent coarseness.

The purity of all the Italian love-songs collected by

Tigri is very remarkable.* Although the passion expressed in them is Oriental in its vehemence, not a word falls which could offend a virgin's ear. The one desire of lovers is lifelong union in marriage. The damo—for so a sweetheart is termed in Tuscany—trembles until he has gained the approval of his future mother-in-law, and forbids the girl he is courting to leave her house to talk to him at night:—

"Dice che tu ti affacci alla finestra:
Ma non ti dice che tu vada fuora,
Perchè, la notte, è cosa disonesta."

All the language of his love is respectful. Signore, or master of my soul, madonna, anima mia, dolce mio ben, nobil persona, are the terms of adoration with which he approaches his mistress. The elevation of feeling and perfect breeding which Manzoni has so well delineated in the loves of Renzo and Lucia are traditional among Italian country-folk. They are conscious that true gentleness is no matter of birth or fortune:—

"E tu non mi lasciar per poverezza,
Chè povertà non guasta gentilezza." †

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* It must be remarked that Tigri draws a strong contrast in this respect between the songs of the mountain districts which he has printed and those of the towns, and that Pitré, in his edition of Sicilian *Volkslieder*, expressly alludes to the coarseness of a whole class which he had omitted.

† In a rispetto, of which I subjoin a translation, sung by a poor lad to a mistress of higher rank, love itself is pleaded as the sign of a gentle soul:

"My state is poor: I am not meet
To court so nobly born a love;
For poverty hath tied my feet,
Trying to climb too far above.
Yet am I gentle, loving thee;
Nor need thou shun my poverty."

This in itself constitutes an important element of culture, and explains to some extent the high romantic qualities of their impassioned poetry. The beauty of their land reveals still more. "O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint!" Virgil's exclamation is as true now as it was when he sang the labours of Italian country-folk some nineteen centuries ago. To a traveller from the north there is a pathos even in the contrast between the country in which these children of a happier climate toil, and those bleak, winter-beaten fields where our own peasants pass their lives. The cold nights and warm days of Tuscan spring-time are like a Swiss summer. They make rich pasture and a hardy race of men. Tracts of corn and oats and rye alternate with patches of flax in full flower, with meadows yellow with buttercups or pink with ragged robin; the young vines, running from bough to bough of elm and mulberry, are just coming into leaf. The poplars are fresh with bright green foliage. In the midst of this blooming plain stand ancient cities ringed with hills, some rising to snowy Apennines, some covered with white convents and sparkling with villas. Cypresses shoot, black and spirelike, amid grey clouds of olive-boughs upon the slopes; and above, where vegetation borders on the barren rock, are masses of ilex and arbutus interspersed with chestnut-trees not yet in leaf. Men and women are everywhere at work, ploughing with great white oxen, or tilling the soil with spades six feet in length—Sabellian ligones. The songs of nightingales among acacia-trees, and the sharp scream of swallows wheeling in air, mingle with the monotonous chant that always rises from the country-people at their toil. Here and there on points of vantage, where the hill-slopes sink into the plain, cluster white villages with flower-like campanili. It is there that the veglia, or evening

rendezvous of lovers, the serenades and balls and feste, of which one hears so much in the popular minstrelsy, take place. Of course it would not be difficult to paint the darker shades of this picture. Autumn comes, when the contadini of Lucca and Siena and Pistoja go forth to work in the unwholesome marshes of the Maremma, or of Corsica and Sardinia. Dismal superstitions and hereditary hatreds cast their blight over a life externally so fair. The bad government of centuries has perverted in many ways the instincts of a people naturally mild and cheerful and peace-loving. But as far as nature can make men happy, these husbandmen are surely to be reckoned fortunate, and in their songs we find little to remind us of what is otherwise than sunny in their lot.

A translator of these *Volkslieder* has to contend with difficulties of no ordinary kind. The freshness of their phrases, the spontaneity of their sentiments, and the melody of their unstudied cadences, are inimitable. So again is the peculiar effect of their frequent transitions from the most fanciful imagery to the language of prose. No mere student can hope to rival, far less to reproduce, in a foreign tongue, the charm of verse which sprang untaught from the hearts of simple folk, which lives unwritten on the lips of lovers, and which should never be dissociated from singing.* There are, besides, peculiarities in the very structure of the popular rispetto. The constant repetition of the same phrase with slight variations gives an antique force and flavour to these ditties, like that which we appreciate in our own ballads, but which may easily, in the translation,

* When the Cherubina, of whom mention has been made above, was asked by Signor Tigri to dictate some of her rispetti, she answered, "O signore! ne dico tanti quando li canto! . . . ma ora . . . bisognerebbe averli tutti in visione; se no, proprio non vengono."

degenerate into weakness and insipidity. The Tuscan rhymester, again, allows himself the utmost licence. It is usual to find mere assonances like *bene* and *piacere*, *oro* and *volo*, *ala* and *alata*, in the place of rhymes; while such remote resemblances of sound as *colli* and *poggi*, *lascia* and *piazza*, are far from uncommon. To match these rhymes by joining "home" and "alone," "time" and "shine," &c., would of course be a matter of no difficulty; but it has seemed to me on the whole best to preserve, with some exceptions, such accuracy as the English ear requires. I fear, however, that, after all, these wild-flowers of song, transplanted to another climate and placed in a hothouse, will appear but pale and hectic by the side of their robuster brethren of the Tuscan hills.

In the following serenade many of the peculiarities which I have just noticed occur. I have also adhered to the irregularity of rhyme which may be usually observed about the middle of the poem (p. 103):—

"Sleeping or waking, thou sweet face,
Lift up thy fair and tender brow:
List to thy love in this still place;
He calls thee to thy window now:
But bids thee not the house to quit,
Since in the night this were not meet.
Come to thy window, stay within;
I stand without, and sing and sing:
Come to thy window, stay at home;
I stand without, and make my moan."

Here is a serenade of a more impassioned character (p. 99):—

"I come to visit thee, my beauteous queen,
Thee and the house where thou art harboured:
All the long way upon my knees, my queen,
I kiss the earth where'er thy footsteps tread.

"I kiss the earth, and gaze upon the wall,
Whereby thou goest, maid imperial!
I kiss the earth, and gaze upon the house,
Whereby thou farest, queen most beauteous!"

In the next the lover, who has passed the whole night beneath his sweetheart's window, takes leave at the break of day. The feeling of the half hour before dawn, when the sound of bells rises to meet the growing light, and both form a prelude to the glare and noise of day, is expressed with much unconscious poetry (p. 105):—

"I see the dawn e'en now begin to peer:
Therefore I take my leave, and cease to sing.
See how the windows open far and near,
And hear the bells of morning, how they ring!
Through heaven and earth the sounds of ringing swell;
Therefore, bright jasmine flower, sweet maid, farewell!
Through heaven and Rome the sound of ringing goes;
Farewell, bright jasmine flower, sweet maiden rose!"

The next is more quaint (p. 99):—

"I come by night, I come, my soul aflame;
I come in this fair hour of your sweet sleep:
And should I wake you up, it were a shame.
I cannot sleep, and lo! I break your sleep.
To wake you were a shame from your deep rest;
Love never sleeps, nor they whom Love hath blest."

A very great many rispetti are simple panegyrics of the beloved, to find similitude for whose beauty heaven and earth are ransacked. The compliment of the first line in the following song is perfect (p. 23):—

"Beauty was born with you, fair maid:
The sun and moon inclined to you;
On you the snow her whiteness laid,
The rose her rich and radiant hue:

Saint Magdalen her hair unbound,
And Cupid taught you how to wound—
How to wound hearts Dan Cupid taught:
Your beauty drives me love-distraught."

The lady in the next was December's child (p. 25):—

"O beauty, born in winter's night,
Born in the month of spotless snow:
Your face is like a rose so bright;
Your mother may be proud of you!
She may be proud, lady of love,
Such sunlight shines her house above:
She may be proud, lady of heaven,
Such sunlight to her home is given."

The sea wind is the source of beauty to another (p. 16):—

"Nay, marvel not you are so fair;
For you beside the sea were born:
The sea-waves keep you fresh and fair,
Like roses on their leafy thorn.
If roses grow on the rose-bush,
Your roses through midwinter blush;
If roses bloom on the rose-bed,
Your face can show both white and red."

The eyes of a fourth are compared, after quite a new and original fashion, to stars (p. 210):—

"The moon hath risen her plaint to lay
Before the face of Love Divine,
Saying in heaven she will not stay,
Since you have stolen what made her shine:
Aloud she wails with sorrow wan,—
She told her stars and two are gone:
They are not there; you have them now;
They are the eyes in your bright brow."

Nor are girls less ready to praise their lovers, but that

they do not dwell so much on physical perfections. Here is a pleasant greeting (p. 124) :—

"O welcome, welcome, lily white,
Thou fairest youth of all the valley!
When I 'm with you, my soul is light;
I chase away dull melancholy.
I chase all sadness from my heart:
Then welcome, dearest that thou art!
I chase all sadness from my side:
Then welcome, O my love, my pride!
I chase all sadness far away:
Then welcome, welcome, love, to-day!"

The image of a lily is very prettily treated in the next (p. 79) :—

"I planted a lily yestreen at my window;
I set it yestreen, and to-day it sprang up:
When I opened the latch and leaned out of my window,
It shadowed my face with its beautiful cup.
O lily, my lily, how tall you are grown!
Remember how dearly I loved you, my own.
O lily, my lily, you 'll grow to the sky!
Remember I love you for ever and aye."

The same thought of love growing like a flower receives another turn (p. 69) :—

"On yonder hill I saw a flower;
And, could it thence be hither borne,
I 'd plant it here within my bower,
And water it both eve and morn.
Small water wants the stem so straight:
'Tis a love-lily stout as fate.
Small water wants the root so strong:
'Tis a love-lily lasting long.
Small water wants the flower so sheen:
'Tis a love-lily ever green."

Envious tongues have told a girl that her complexion is not good. She replies, with imagery like that of

Virgil's "Alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur" (p. 31):—

"Think it no grief that I am brown,
For all brunettes are born to reign:
White is the snow, yet trodden down;
Black pepper kings need not disdain:
White snow lies mounded on the vales;
Black pepper's weighed in brazen scales."

Another song runs on the same subject (p. 38):—

"The whole world tells me that I'm brown.
The brown earth gives us goodly corn;
The clove-pink too, however brown,
Yet proudly in the hand 'tis borne.
They say my love is black, but he
Shines like an angel-form to me:
They say my love is dark as night;
To me he seems a shape of light."

The freshness of the following spring song recalls the ballads of the Val de Vire in Normandy (p. 85):—

"It was the morning of the first of May,
Into the close I went to pluck a flower;
And there I found a bird of woodland gay,
Who whiled with songs of love the silent hour.
O bird, who fliest from fair Florence, how
Dear love begins, I prithee teach me now!—
Love it begins with music and with song,
And ends with sorrow and with sighs ere long.

Love at first sight is described (p. 79):—

"The very moment that we met,
That moment Love began to beat:
One glance of love we gave, and swore
Never to part for evermore;
We swore together, sighing deep,
Never to part till Death's long sleep."

Here too is a memory of the first days of love (p. 79):—

"If I remember, it was May
When love began between us two:
The roses in the close were gay,
The cherries blackened on the bough.
O cherries black and pears so green!
Of maidens fair you are the queen.
Fruit of black cherry and sweet pear!
Of sweethearts you're the queen, I swear."

The troth is plighted with such promises as these (p. 230):—

"Or ere I leave you, love divine,
Dead tongues shall stir and utter speech,
And running rivers flow with wine,
And fishes swim upon the beach;
Or ere I leave or shun you, these
Lemons shall grow on orange-trees."

The girl confesses her love after this fashion (p. 86):—

"Passing across the billowy sea,
I let, alas, my poor heart fall;
I bade the sailors bring it me;
They said they had not seen it fall.
I asked the sailors, one and two;
They said that I had given it you.
I asked the sailors, two and three;
They said that I had given it thee."

It is not uncommon to speak of love as a sea. Here is a curious play upon this image (p. 227):—

"Ho, Cupid! Sailor Cupid, ho!
Lend me awhile that bark of thine;
For on the billows I will go,
To find my love who once was mine:
And if I find her, she shall wear
A chain around her neck so fair,
Around her neck a glittering bond,
Four stars, a lily, a diamond."

It is also possible that the same thought may occur in the second line of the next ditty (p. 120) :—

"Beneath the earth I'll make a way
To pass the sea and come to you.
People will think I 'm gone away;
But, dear, I shall be seeing you.
People will say that I am dead;
But we 'll pluck roses white and red:
People will think I 'm lost for aye;
But we 'll pluck roses, you and I."

All the little daily incidents are beautified by love. Here is a lover who thanks the mason for making his window so close upon the road that he can see his sweetheart as she passes (p. 118) :—

"Blest be the mason's hand who built
This house of mine by the roadside,
And made my window low and wide
For me to watch my love go by.
And if I knew when she went by,
My window should be fairly gilt;
And if I knew what time she went,
My window should be flower-besprent."

Here is a conceit which reminds one of the pretty epistle of Philostratus, in which the footsteps of the beloved are called *ἐρηρεισμένα φιλήματα* (p. 117) :—

"What time I see you passing by,
I sit and count the steps you take:
You take the steps; I sit and sigh:
Step after step, my sighs awake.
Tell me, dear Love, which more abound,
My sighs or your steps on the ground?
Tell me, dear Love, which are the most,
Your light steps or the sighs they cost?"

A girl complains that she cannot see her lover's house (p. 117) :—

"I lean upon the lattice, and look forth
To see the house wherein my lover dwells.
There grows an envious tree that spoils my mirth:
Cursed be the man who set it on these hills!
But when those jealous boughs are all unclad,
I then shall see the cottage of my lad:
When once that tree is rooted from the hills,
I'll see the house wherein my lover dwells."

In the same mood a girl who has just parted from her sweetheart is angry with the hill beyond which he is travelling (p. 167):—

"I see and see, yet see not what I would:
I see the leaves atremble on the tree:
I saw my love where on the hill he stood,
Yet see him not drop downward to the lea.
O traitor hill, what will you do?
I ask him, live or dead, from you.
O traitor hill, what shall it be?
I ask him, live or dead, from thee."

All the songs of love in absence are very quaint. Here is one which calls our nursery rhymes to mind (p. 119):—

"I would I were a bird so free,
That I had wings to fly away:
Unto that window I would flee,
Where stands my love and grinds all day.
Grind, miller, grind; the water's deep!
I cannot grind; love makes me weep.
Grind, miller, grind; the waters flow!
I cannot grind; love wastes me so."

The next begins after the same fashion, but breaks into a very shower of benedictions (p. 118):—

"Would God I were a swallow free,
That I had wings to fly away:
Upon the miller's door I'd be,
Where stands my love and grinds all day:
Upon the door, upon the sill,
Where stays my love;—God bless him still!

God bless my love, and blessèd be
His house, and bless my house for me;
Yea, blest be both, and ever blest
My lover's house, and all the rest!"

The girl alone at home in her garden sees a wood-dove flying by and calls to it (p. 179):—

"O dove, who fliest far to yonder hill,
Dear dove, who in the rock hast madê thy nest,
Let me a feather from thy pinion pull,
For I will write to him who loves me best.
And when I 've written it and made it clear,
I 'll give thee back thy feather, dove so dear:
And when I've written it and sealed it, then
I 'll give thee back thy feather love-laden."

A swallow is asked to lend the same kind service (p. 179):—

"O swallow, swallow, flying through the air,
Turn, turn, I prithee, from thy flight above!
Give me one feather from thy wing so fair,
For I will write a letter to my love.
When I have written it and made it clear,
I 'll give thee back thy feather, swallow dear;
When I have written it on paper white,
I 'll make, I swear, thy missing feather right;
When once 'tis written on fair leaves of gold,
I 'll give thee back thy wing and flight so bold."

Long before Tennyson's song in the "Princess," it would seem that swallows were favourite messengers of love. In the next song which I translate, the repetition of one thought with delicate variation is full of character (p. 178):—

"O swallow, flying over hill and plain,
If thou shouldst find my love, oh bid him come!
And tell him, on these mountains I remain
Even as a lamb who cannot find her home:
And tell him, I am left all, all alone,
Even as a tree whose flowers are overblown:

And tell him, I am left without a mate
Even as a tree whose boughs are desolate:
And tell him, I am left uncomforted
Even as the grass upon the meadows dead."

The following is spoken by a girl who has been watching the lads of the village returning from their autumn service in the plain, and whose damo comes the last of all (p. 240):—

"O dear my love, you come too late!
What found you by the way to do?
I saw your comrades pass the gate,
But yet not you, dear heart, not you!
If but a little more you'd stayed,
With sighs you would have found me dead;
If but a while you'd kept me crying,
With sighs you would have found me dying."

The *amantium iræ* find a place too in these rustic ditties. A girl explains to her sweatheart (p. 240):—

"'Twas told me and vouchsafed for true,
Your kin are wroth as wroth can be;
For loving me they swear at you,
They swear at you because of me;
Your father, mother, all your folk,
Because you love me, chafe and choke:
Then set your kith and kin at ease;
Set them at ease and let me die:
Set the whole clan of them at ease;
Set them at ease and see me die!"

Another suspects that her damo has paid his suit to a rival (p. 200):—

"On Sunday morning well I knew
Where gaily dressed you turned your feet;
And there were many saw it too,
And came to tell me through the street:

And when they spoke, I smiled, ah me!
But in my room wept privately;
And when they spoke, I sang for pride,
But in my room alone I sighed."

Then come reconciliations (p. 223) :—

"Let us make peace, my love, my bliss!
For cruel strife can last no more.
If you say nay, yet I say yes:
Twixt me and you there is no war.
Princes and mighty lords make peace;
And so may lovers twain, I wis:
Princes and soldiers sign a truce;
And so may two sweethearts like us:
Princes and potentates agree;
And so may friends like you and me."

There is much character about the following, which is spoken by the damo (p. 223) :—

"As yonder mountain height I trod,
I chanced to think of your dear name;
I knelt with clasped hands on the sod,
And thought of my neglect with shame:
I knelt upon the stone, and swore
Our love should bloom as heretofore."

Sometimes the language of affection takes a more imaginative tone, as in the following (p. 232) :—

"Dearest, what time you mount to heaven above,
I 'll meet you holding in my hand my heart:
You to your breast shall clasp me full of love,
And I will lead you to our Lord apart.
Our Lord, when he our love so true hath known,
Shall make of our two hearts one heart alone;
One heart shall make of our two hearts, to rest
In heaven amid the splendours of the blest."

This was the woman's. Here is the man's (p. 113) :—

"If I were master of all loveliness,
I 'd make thee still more lovely than thou art;

If I were master of all wealthiness,
Much gold and silver should be thine, sweetheart!
If I were master of the house of hell,
I 'd bar the brazen gates in thy sweet face;
Or ruled the place where purging spirits dwell,
I 'd free thee from that punishment apace.
Were I in paradise, and thou shouldst come,
I 'd stand aside, my love, to make thee room;
Were I in paradise, well seated there,
I 'd quit my place to give it thee, my fair!"

Sometimes, but very rarely, weird images are sought to clothe passion, as in the following (p. 136):—

"Down into hell I went and thence returned:
Ah me! alas! the people that were there!
I found a room where many candles burned,
And saw within my love that languished there.
Whenas she saw me, she was glad of cheer,
And at the last she said; Sweet soul of mine,
Dost thou recall the time long past, so dear,
When thou didst say to me, Sweet soul of mine?
Now kiss me on the mouth, my dearest, here;
Kiss me that I for once may cease to pine!
So sweet, ah me, is thy dear mouth, so dear,
That of thy mercy prithee sweeten mine!
Now love, that thou hast kissed me, now, I say,
Look not to leave this place again for aye."

Or again in this (p. 232):—

"Methinks I hear, I hear a voice that cries:
Beyond the hill it floats upon the air.
It is my lover come to bid me rise,
If I am fain forthwith toward heaven to fare.
But I have answered him, and said him No!
I 've given my paradise, my heaven, for you:
Till we together go to paradise,
I 'll stay on earth and love your beauteous eyes."

But it is not with such remote and eery thoughts that the rustic muse of Italy can deal successfully. Far

better is the following half-playful description of love-sadness (p. 71):—

"Ah me, alas! who knew not how to sigh!
Of sighs I now full well have learned the art:
Sighing at table when to eat I try,
Sighing within my little room apart,
Sighing when jests and laughter round me fly,
Sighing with her and her who know my heart:
I sigh at first, and then I go on sighing;
'Tis for your eyes that I am ever sighing:
I sigh at first, and sigh the whole year through;
And 'tis your eyes that keep me sighing so."

The next two rispetti, delicious in their naiveté, might seem to have been extracted from the libretto of an opera, but that they lack the sympathising chorus, who should have stood at hand, ready to chime in with "he," "she," and "they," to the "I," "you," and "we" of the lovers (p. 123):—

"Ah, when will dawn that glorious day
When you will softly mount my stair?
My kin shall bring you on the way:
I shall be first to greet you there.
Ah, when will dawn that day of bliss
When we before the priest say Yes?"

"Ah, when will dawn that blissful day
When I shall softly mount your stair,
Your brothers meet me on the way,
And one by one I greet them there?
When comes the day, my staff, my strength,
To call your mother mine at length?
When will the day come, love of mine,
I shall be yours and you be mine?"

Hitherto the songs have told only of happy love, or of love returned. Some of the best, however, are unhappy. Here is one, for instance, steeped in gloom (p. 142):—

"They have this custom in fair Naples town;
They never mourn a man when he is dead:
The mother weeps when she has reared a son
To be a serf and slave by love misled;
The mother weeps when she a son hath born
To be the serf and slave of galley scorn;
The mother weeps when she a son gives suck
To be the serf and slave of city luck."

The following contains a fine wild image, wrought out with strange passion in detail (p. 300):—

"I 'll spread a table brave for revelry,
And to the feast will bid sad lovers all.
For meat I 'll give them my heart's misery;
For drink I 'll give these briny tears that fall.
Sorrows and sighs shall be the varletry,
To serve the lovers at this festival:
The table shall be death, black death profound;
Weep, stones, and utter sighs, ye walls around!
The table shall be death, yea, sacred death;
Weep, stones, and sigh as one that sorroweth!"

Nor is the next a whit less in the vein of mad Jeronimo (p. 304):—

"High up, high up, a house I 'll rear,
High up, high up, on yonder height;
At every window set a snare,
With treason, to betray the night;
With treason, to betray the stars,
Since I 'm betrayed by my false feres;
With treason, to betray the day,
Since Love betrayed me, well away!"

The vengeance of an Italian reveals itself in the energetic song which I quote next (p. 303):—

"I have a sword; 'twould cut a brazen bell,
Tough steel 'twould cut, if there were any need:
I 've had it tempered in the streams of hell
By masters mighty in the mystic rede;

I 've had it tempered by the light of stars;
Then let him come whose skin is stout as Mars;
I 've had it tempered to a trenchant blade;
Then let him come who stole from me my maid."

More mild, but brimful of the bitterness of a soul to whom the whole world has become but ashes in the death of love, is the following lament (p. 143):—

" Call me the lovely Golden Locks no more,
But call me Sad Maid of the golden hair.
If there be wretched women, sure I think
I too may rank among the most forlorn.
I fling a palm into the sea; 'twill sink:
Others throw lead, and it is lightly borne.
What have I done, dear Lord, the world to cross?
Gold in my hand forthwith is turned to dross.
How have I made, dear Lord, dame Fortune wroth?
Gold in my hand forthwith is turned to froth.
What have I done, dear Lord, to fret the folk?
Gold in my hand forthwith is turned to smoke."

Here is pathos (p. 172):—

" The wood-dove who hath lost her mate,
She lives a dolorous life, I ween;
She seeks a stream and bathes in it,
And drinks that water foul and green:
With other birds she will not mate,
Nor haunt, I wis, the flowery treen;
She bathes her wings and strikes her breast;
Her mate is lost: oh, sore unrest!"

And here is fanciful despair (p. 168):—

" I 'll build a house of sobs and sighs,
With tears the lime I 'll slack;
And there I 'll dwell with weeping eyes
Until my love come back:
And there I 'll stay with eyes that burn
Until I see my love return."

The house of love has been deserted, and the lover comes to moan beneath its silent eaves (p. 171):—

"Dark house and window desolate!
Where is the sun which shone so fair?
'Twas here we danced and laughed at fate:
Now the stones weep; I see them there.
They weep, and feel a grievous chill:
Dark house and widowed window-sill!"

And what can be more piteous than this prayer? (p. 309)—

"Love, if you love me, delve a tomb,
And lay me there the earth beneath;
After a year, come see my bones,
And make them dice to play therewith.
But when you're tired of that game,
Then throw those dice into the flame;
But when you're tired of gaming free,
Then throw those dice into the sea."

The simpler expression of sorrow to the death is, as usual, more impressive. A girl speaks thus within sight of the grave (p. 308):—

"Yes, I shall die: what wilt thou gain?
The cross before my bier will go;
And thou wilt hear the bells complain,
The *Misereres* loud and low.
Midmost the church thou 'lt see me lie
With folded hands and frozen eye;
Then say at last, I do repent!—
Nought else remains when fires are spent."

Here is a rustic Œnone (p. 307):—

"Fell death, that fliest fraught with woe!
Thy gloomy snares the world ensphere:
Where no man calls, thou lov'st to go;
But when we call, thou wilt not hear.
Fell death, false death of treachery,
Thou makest all content but me."

Another is less reproachful, but scarcely less sad (p. 308) :—

"Strew me with blossoms when I die,
Nor lay me 'neath the earth below;
Beyond those walls, there let me lie,
Where oftentimes we used to go.
There lay me to the wind and rain;
Dying for you, I feel no pain:
There lay me to the sun above;
Dying for you, I die of love."

Yet another of these pitiful love-wailings displays much poetry of expression (p. 271) :—

"I dug the sea, and delved the barren sand:
I wrote with dust and gave it to the wind:
Of melting snow, false Love, was made thy band,
Which suddenly the day's bright beams unbind.
Now am I ware, and know my own mistake—
How false are all the promises you make;
Now am I ware, and know the fact, ah me!
That who confides in you, deceived will be."

It would scarcely be well to pause upon these very doleful ditties. Take, then, the following little serenade, in which the lover on his way to visit his mistress has unconsciously fallen on the same thought as Bion (p. 85) :—

"Yestreen I went my love to greet,
By yonder village path below:
Night in a coppice found my feet;
I called the moon her light to show—
O moon, who needst no flame to fire thy face,
Look forth and lend me light a little space!"

Enough has been quoted to illustrate the character of the Tuscan popular poetry. These village rispetti bear the same relation to the canzoniere of Petrarch as

the "savage drupe" to the "suave plum." They are, as it were, the wild stock of that highly artificial flower of art. Herein lies, perhaps, their chief importance. As in our ballad literature we may discern the stuff of the Elizabethan drama undeveloped, so in the Tuscan people's songs we can trace the crude form of that poetic instinct which produced the sonnets to Laura. It is also very probable that some such rustic minstrelsy preceded the Idylls of Theocritus and the Bucolics of Virgil; for coincidences of thought and imagery, which can scarcely be referred to any conscious study of the ancients, are not few. Popular poetry has this great value for the student of literature: it enables him to trace those forms of fancy and of feeling which are native to the people, and which must ultimately determine the character of national art, however much that may be modified by culture.

PALERMO.

THE NORMANS IN SICILY.

SICILY, in the centre of the Mediterranean, has been throughout all history the meeting-place and battle-ground of the races that contributed to civilise the West. It was here that the Greeks measured their strength against Phœnicia, and that Carthage fought her first duel with Rome. Here the bravery of Hellenes triumphed over barbarian force in the victories of Gelon and Timoleon. Here in the harbour of Syracuse, the Athenian Empire succumbed to its own intemperate ambition. Here, in the end, Rome laid her mortmain upon Greek, Phœnician, and Sikeliot alike, turning the island into a granary and reducing its inhabitants to serfdom. When the classic age had closed, when Belisarius had vainly reconquered from the Goths for the empire of the East the fair island of Persephone and Zeus Olympius, then came the Mussulman, filling up with an interval of Oriental luxury and Arabian culture the period of utter deadness between the ancient and the modern world. To Islam succeeded the conquerors of the house of Hauteville, Norman knights who had but lately left their Scandinavian shores, and settled in the northern provinces of France. The Normans flourished for a season, and were merged in a line of Suabian princes, old Barbarossa's progeny. German

rulers thus came to sway the corn-lands of Trinacria, until the bitter hatred of the Popes extinguished the house of Hohenstauffen upon the battle-field of Grandella and the scaffold of Naples. Frenchmen had the next turn—for a brief space only; since Palermo cried to the sound of her tocsins, "Mora, Mora," and the tyranny of Anjou was expunged with blood. Spain, the tardy and patient power, which inherited so much from the failure of more brilliant races, came at last, and tightened so firm a hold upon the island, that from the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, with one brief exception, Sicily belonged to princes of Aragon, Castile, and Bourbon. These vicissitudes have left their traces everywhere. The Greek temples of Segeste and Girgenti and Selinus, the Roman amphitheatre of Syracuse, the Byzantine mosaics and Saracenic villas of Palermo, the Norman cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalú, and the Spanish habits which still characterise the life of Sicilian cities, testify to the successive strata of races which have been deposited upon the island. Amid its anarchy of tongues the Latin alone has triumphed. In the time of the Greek colonists Sicily was polyglot. During the Saracenic occupation it was trilingual. It is now, and during modern history it has always been Italian. Differences of language and of nationality have gradually been fused into one substance, by the spirit which emanates from Rome, and vivifies the Latin race.

The geographical position of Sicily has always influenced its history in a very marked way. The eastern coast, which is turned toward Greece and Italy, has been the centre of Aryan civilisation in the island, so that during Greek and Roman ascendancy, Syracuse was held the capital. The western end, which projects into

the African sea, was occupied in the time of the Hellenes by Phœnicians, and afterwards by Mussulmans: consequently Panormus, the ancient seat of Punic colonists, now called Palermo, became the centre of the Moslem rule, which, inherited entire by the Norman chieftains, was transmitted eventually to Spain. Palermo, devoid of classic monuments, and unknown except as a name to the historians of Greek civilisation, is therefore the modern capital of the island. "Prima sedes, corona regis, et regni caput" is the motto inscribed upon the cathedral porch and the archiepiscopal throne of Palermo: nor has any other city, except Messina,* presumed to contest this title.

Perhaps there are few spots upon the surface of the globe more beautiful than Palermo. The hills on either hand descend upon the sea with long-drawn delicately broken outlines, so exquisitely tinted with aerial hues, that at early dawn or beneath the blue light of a full moon the panorama seems to be some fabric of the fancy, that must fade away, "like shapes of clouds we form," to nothing. Within the cradle of these hills, and close upon the tideless water, lies the city. Behind and around on every side stretches the famous *Conca d'Oro*, or golden shell, a plain of marvellous fertility, so called because of its richness and also because of its shape; for it tapers to a fine point where the mountains meet, and spreads abroad, where they diverge, like a cornucopia toward the sea. The whole of this long vega is a garden, thick with olive-groves and orange-trees, with orchards of nespole and palms and almonds,

* Messina, owing to its mercantile position between the Levant, Italy, and France, and as the key to Sicily from the mainland, might probably have become the modern capital, had not the Normans found a state machinery ready to their use centralised at Palermo.

with fig-trees and locust-trees, with judas-trees' that blush in spring, and with flowers as multitudinously brilliant as the fretwork of sunset clouds. It was here that in the days of the Kelbite dynasty, the sugar-cane and cotton-tree and mulberry supplied both East and West with produce for the banquet and the paper-mill and the silk loom; and though these industries are now neglected, vast gardens of cactuses still give a strangely Oriental character to the scenery of Palermo, while the land flows with honey-sweet wine instead of sugar. The language in which Arabian poets extolled the charms of this fair land is even now nowise extravagant: "Oh how beautiful is the lakelet of the twin palms, and the island where the spacious palace stands! The limpid water of the double springs resembles liquid pearls, and their basin is a sea: you would say that the branches of the trees stretched down to see the fishes in the pool and smile at them. The great fishes swim in those clear waters and the birds among the gardens tune their songs. The ripe oranges of the island are like fire that burns on boughs of emerald; the pale lemon reminds me of a lover who has passed the night in weeping for his absent darling. The two palms may be compared to lovers who have gained an inaccessible retreat against their enemies, or raise themselves erect in pride to confound the murmurs and ill thoughts of jealous men. O palms of the two lakelets of Palermo, may ceaseless, undisturbed, and plenteous dews for ever keep your freshness!" Such is the poetry which suits the environs of Palermo, where the Moorish villas of La Zisa and La Cuba and La Favara still stand, and where the modern gardens, though wilder, are scarcely less delightful than those beneath which King Roger discoursed

with Edrisi, and Gian da Procida surprised his sleeping mistress.* The groves of oranges and lemons are an inexhaustible source of joy: not only because of their "golden lamps in a green night," but also because of their silvery constellations, nebulæ, and drifts of stars, in the same green night, and milky ways of blossoms on the ground beneath. As in all southern scenery, the transition from these perfumed thickly clustering gardens to the bare unirrigated hillsides is very striking. There the dwarf-palm tufts with its spiky foliage the clefts of limestone rock, and the lizards run in and out among bushes of tree-spurge and wild cactus and grey asphodels. The sea-shore is a tangle of lilac and oleander and laurustinus and myrtle and lentisk and cytisus and geranium. The flowering plants that make our shrubberies gay in spring with blossoms, are here wild, running riot upon the sand-heaps of Mondello or beneath the barren slopes of Monte Pellegrino.

It was into this terrestrial paradise, cultivated through two preceding centuries by the Arabs, who of all races were wisest in the arts of irrigation and landscape-gardening, that the Norsemen entered as conquerors, and lay down to pass their lives.†

* Boccaccio, Giorn. v. Nov. 6.

† The Saracens possessed themselves of Sicily by a gradual conquest, which began about 827 A.D. Disembarking on the little isle of Pantellaria and the headland of Lilybœum, where of old the Carthaginians used to enter Sicily, they began by overrunning the island for the first four years. In 831 they took Palermo; during the next ten years they subjugated the Val di Mazara; between 841 and 859 they possessed themselves of the Val di Noto; after this they extended their conquest over the seaport towns of the Val Demone, but neglected to reduce the whole of the N.E. district. Syracuse was stormed and reduced to ruins after a desperate defence in 878, while Leo, the heir of the Greek Empire, contented himself with composing two Anacreontic elegies on the disaster at Byzantium. In 895 Sicily was wholly lost to the Greeks, by a treaty signed between the

No chapter of history more resembles a romance than that which records the sudden rise and brief splendour of the house of Hauteville. In one generation the sons of Tancred passed from the condition of squires in the Norman vale of Cotentin, to kinghood in the richest island of the southern sea. The Norse adventurers became Sultans of an Oriental capital. The sea-robbers assumed together with the sceptre the culture of an Arabian court. The marauders whose armies burned Rome, received at papal hands the mitre and dalmatic as symbols of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.* The brigands who on their first appearance in Italy had pillaged stables and farmyards to supply their needs, lived to mate their daughters with princes and to sway the politics of Europe with gold. The freebooters, whose skill consisted in the use of sword and shield, whose brains were vigorous in strategy or statecraft, and whose pleasures were confined to the hunting-field and the wine-cup, raised villas like the Zisa and incrusted the cathedral of Monreale with mosaics. Finally, while the race was yet vigorous, after giving two heroes to the first Crusade, it transmitted its titles, its temper, and its blood to the great Emperor, who was destined to fight out upon the battle-field of Italy the strife of Empire against Papacy, and to bequeath to mediæval Europe

Saracens and the remaining Christian towns. The Christians during the Mussulman occupation were divided into four classes—(1) A few independent municipalities obedient loosely to the Greek Empire; (2) tributaries who paid the Arabs what they would otherwise have sent to Byzantium; (3) vassals, whose towns had fallen by arms or treaty into the hands of the conquerors, and who, though their property was respected and religion tolerated, were called "dsimmi" or "humbled;" (4) serfs, prisoners of war, sold as slaves or attached to the soil (Amari, vol. i.)

* King Roger in the mosaics of the Martorana Church at Palermo wears the dalmatic, and receives his crown from the hands of Christ.

the tradition of cosmopolitan culture. The physical energy of this brood of heroes was such as can scarcely be paralleled in history. Tancred de Hauteville begat two families by different wives. Of his children twelve were sons; two of whom stayed with their father in Normandy, while ten sought fame and found a kingdom in the south. Of these, William Iron Arm, the first Count of Apulia; Robert Guiscard, who united Calabria and Apulia under one dukedom, and carried victorious arms against both Emperors of East and West; and Roger, the Great Count, who added Sicily to the conquests of the Normans and bequeathed the kingdom of South Italy to his son, rose to the highest name. But all the brothers shared the great qualities of the house; and two of them, Humphrey and Drogo, also wore a coronet. Large of limb and stout of heart, persevering under difficulties, crafty yet gifted with the semblance of sincerity, combining the piety of pilgrims with the morals of highwaymen, the sturdiness of barbarians with the plasticity of culture, eloquent in the council-chamber and the field, dear to their soldiers for their bravery and to women for their beauty, equally eminent as generals and as rulers, restrained by no scruples but such as policy suggested, restless in their energy, yet neither fickle nor rash, comprehensive in their views, but indefatigable in detail, these lions among men were made to conquer in the face of overwhelming obstacles, and to hold their conquests with a grasp of iron. What they wrought, whether wisely or not for the ultimate advantage of Italy, endures to this day, while the work of so many emperors, republics, and princes has passed and shifted like the scenes in a pantomime. Through them the Greeks, the Lombards, and the Moors were extinguished in the south. The Papacy was checked in its

attempt to found a province of St Peter below the Tiber. The republics of Naples, Gaeta, Amalfi, which might have rivalled perchance with Milan, Genoa, and Florence, were subdued to a master's hand. In short, to the Normans Italy owed that kingdom of the two Sicilies which formed one-third of her political balance, and which proved the cause of all her most serious revolutions.

Roger, the youngest of the Hauteville family, and the founder of the kingdom of Sicily, showed by his untamable spirit and sound intellect that his father's vigour remained unexhausted. Each of Tancred's sons was physically speaking a masterpiece, and the last was the prime work of all. This Roger, styled the Great Count, begat a second Roger, the first king of Sicily, whose son and grandson, both named William, ruled in succession at Palermo. With them the direct line of the house of Hauteville expired. It would seem as if the energy and fertility of the stock had been drained by its efforts in the first three generations. Constance, the heiress of the family, who married Henry VI. and gave birth to the Emperor Frederick II., was daughter of King Roger, and therefore third in descent from Tancred. Drawing her blood more immediately from the parent stem, she thus transmitted to the princes of the race of Hohenstauffen the vigour of her Norman ancestry unweakened. This was a circumstance of no small moment in the history of Europe. Upon the fierce and daring Suabian stem were grafted the pertinacity, the cunning, the versatility of the Norman adventurers. Young Frederick, while strong and subtle enough to stand for himself against the world, was so finely tempered by the blended strains of his parentage that he received the polish of an Oriental education without effeminacy.

Called upon to administer the affairs of Germany, to govern Italy, to contend with the Papacy, and to settle by arms and treaties the great Oriental question of his days, Frederick, cosmopolitan from the cradle, was equal to the task. Had Europe been but ready, the Renaissance would have dated from his reign, and a universal empire, if not of political government, yet of intellectual culture, might have been firmly instituted.

Of the personal appearance of the Norman chiefs—their fair hair, clear eyes, and broad shoulders—we hear much from the chroniclers. One minutely studied portrait will serve to bring the whole race vividly before us. Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, the son of Robert Guiscard, and first cousin to Tancred of Montferrat, was thus described by Anna Comnena, who saw him at her father's court during the first Crusade: "Neither amongst our own nation (the Greeks), nor amongst foreigners, is there in our age a man equal to Bohemond. His presence dazzled the eyes, as his reputation the fancy. He was one cubit taller than the tallest man known. In his waist he was thin, but broad in his shoulders and chest, without being either too thin or too fat. His arms were strong, his hands full and large, his feet firm and solid. He stooped a little, but through habit only, and not on account of any deformity. He was fair, but on his cheeks there was an agreeable mixture of vermilion. His hair was not loose over his shoulders, according to the fashion of the barbarians, but was cut above his ears. His eyes were blue and full of wrath and fierceness. His nostrils were large, inasmuch as having a wide chest and a great heart, his lungs required an unusual quantity of air to moderate the warmth of his blood. His handsome face had in itself something gentle and softening, but the height of

his person and the fierceness of his looks had something wild and terrible. He was more dreadful in his smiles than others in their rage." When we read this description, remembering the romance of Bohemond's ancestry and his own life, we do not wonder at the tales of chivalry. Those "knights of Logres and of Lyoness, Lancelot or Pelleas or Pellenore," with whose adventures our tawny-haired magnificent Plantagenets amused their leisure, become realities. The manly beauty, described by the Byzantine princess in words which seem to betray a more than common interest in her handsome foe, was hereditary in the house of Hauteville. They transmitted it to the last of the Suabian dynasty, to Manfred and Conradin, and to the king Enzio, whose long golden hair fell down from his shoulders to his saddle-bow as he rode, a captive, into Bologna.

The story of the Norman conquest is told by two chroniclers — William of Apulia, who received his materials from Robert Guiscard, and Godfrey Malaterra, who wrote down the oral narrative of Roger. Thus we possess what is tantamount to personal memoirs of the Norman chiefs. Nevertheless, a veil of legendary romance obscures the first appearance of the Scandinavian warriors upon the scene of history. William of Apulia tells how in the course of a pilgrimage to St Michael's shrine on Monte Gargano, certain knights of Normandy were accosted by a stranger of imposing aspect, who persuaded them to draw their swords in the quarrel of the Lombard towns of South Italy against the Greeks. This man was Melo of Bari. Whether his invitation were so theatrically conveyed or not, it is probable that the Norsemen made their first acquaintance with Apulia on a pilgrimage to the Italian Michael's mount; and it is certain that Melo, whom we dimly descry as a patriot

of enlarged views and indomitable constancy, provided them with arms and horses, raised troops in Salerno and Benevento to assist them, and directed them against the Greeks. This happened in 1017. Twelve years later we find the town of Aversa built and occupied by Normans under the control of their Count Rainulf; while another band, headed by Ardoin, a Lombard of Milan, lived at large upon the country, selling its services to the Byzantine Greeks. In the anarchy of Southern Italy at this epoch, when the decaying Empire of the East was relaxing its hold upon the Apulian provinces, when the Papacy was beginning to lift up its head after the ignominy of Theodora and Marozia, and the Lombard power was slowly dissolving upon its ill-established foundations, the Norman adventurers pursued a policy which, however changeful, was invariably self-advantageous. On whatever side they fought, they took care that the profits of war should accrue to their own colony. Quarrel as they might among themselves, they were always found at one against a common foe. And such was their reputation in the field that the hardiest soldiers errant of all nations joined their standard. Thus it fell out that when Ardoin and his Normans had helped Maniaces to wrest the eastern districts of Sicily from the Moors, they returned, upon an insult offered by the Greek general, to extend the right hand of fellowship to Rainulf and his Normans of Aversa. "Why should you stay here like a rat in his hole, when with our help you might rule those fertile plains, expelling the women in armour who keep guard over them?" The agreement of Ardoin and Rainulf formed the basis of the future Norman power. Their companies joined forces. Melfi was chosen as the centre of their federal government. The

united Norman colony elected twelve chiefs or counts of equal authority; and henceforth they thought only of consolidating their ascendancy over the effete races which had hitherto pretended to employ their arms. The genius of their race and age, however, was unfavourable to federations. In a short time the ablest man among them, the true king, by right of personal vigour and mental cunning, showed himself. It was at this point that the house of Hauteville rose to the altitude of its romantic destiny. William Iron Arm was proclaimed Count of Apulia. Two of his brothers succeeded him in the same dignity. His half-brother, Robert Guiscard, imprisoned one Pope,* Leo IX., and wrested from another, Nicholas II., the title of Duke of Apulia and Calabria. By the help of his youngest brother, Roger, he gradually completed the conquest of Italy below the Tiber, and then addressed himself to the task of subduing Sicily. The Papacy, incapable of opposing the military vigour of the Northmen, was distracted between jealousy of their growing importance and desire to utilise them for its own advantage.† The temptation

* The Normans were lucky in getting hold of Popes. King Roger caught Innocent II. at San Germano in 1139, and got from him the confirmation of all his titles.

† Even the great Hildebrand wavered in his policy toward Robert Guiscard. Having raised an army by the help of the Countess Matilda in 1074, he excommunicated Robert and made war against him. Robert proved more than his match in force and craft; and Hildebrand had to confirm his title as duke, and designate him Knight of St Peter in 1080. When Robert drove the Emperor Henry IV. from Rome, and burned the city of the Cœlian, Hildebrand retired with his terrible defender to Salerno and died there in 1085. Robert and both Rogers were good sons of the Church, deserving the titles of "Terror of the faithless," "Sword of the Lord drawn from the scabbard of Sicily," as long as they were suffered to pursue their own schemes of empire. They respected the Pope's person and his demesne of Benevento; they were largely liberal in donations to churches and abbeys. But they did not suffer their piety to interfere with their ambition.

to employ these filial pirates as a cat's paw for restoring Sicily to the bosom of the Church, was too strong to be resisted: in spite of many ebbs and flows of policy, the favour which the Popes accorded to the Normans gilded the might and cunning of the adventurers with the specious splendour of acknowledged sanctity. The time might come for casting off these powerful allies and adding their conquests to the patrimony of St Peter. Meanwhile it costs nothing to give away what does not belong to one, particularly when by doing so a title to the same is gradually formed. So the Popes reckoned. Robert and Roger went forth with banners blessed by Rome to subjugate the island of the Greek and Moor.

The honours of this conquest, paralleled for boldness only by the achievements of Cortes and Pizarro, belong to Roger. It is true that since the fall of the Kelbite dynasty Sicily had been shaken by anarchy and despotism, by the petty quarrels of princes and party leaders, and to some extent also by the invasion of Maniaces. Yet on the approach of Roger with a handful of Norman knights, "the island was guarded," to quote Gibbon's energetic phrase, "to the water's edge." For some years he had to content himself with raids and harrying excursions, making Messina, which he won from the Moors by the aid of their Christian serfs and vassals, the basis of his operations, and retiring from time to time across the Faro with booty to Reggio. The Mussulmans had never thoroughly subdued the north-eastern highlands of Sicily. Satisfied with occupying the whole western and southern sections of the island, with planting their government firmly at Palermo, destroying Syracuse, and establishing a military fort on the heights of Castro Giovanni, they had somewhat neglected the Christian populations of the Val Demone. Thus the key to Sicily

upon the Italian side fell into the hands of the invaders. From Messina Roger advanced by Rametta and Centorbi to Troina, a hill-town raised high above the level of the sea, within view of the solemn blue-black pyramid of Etna. There he planted a garrison in 1062, two years after his first incursion into the island. The interval had been employed in marches and countermarches, descents upon the vale of Catania, and hurried expeditions as far as Girgenti, on the southern coast. One great battle is recorded beneath the walls of Castro Giovanni, when six hundred Norman knights, so say the chroniclers, engaged with fifteen thousand of the Arabian chivalry and one hundred thousand foot soldiers. However great the exaggeration of these numbers, it is certain that the Christians fought at fearful odds that day, and that all the eloquence of Roger, who wrought on their fanaticism in his speech before the battle, was needed to raise their courage to the sticking-point. The scene of the great rout of Saracens which followed, is in every respect memorable. Castro Giovanni, the old Enna of the Greeks and Romans, stands on the top of a precipitous mountain, two thousand feet above a plain which waves with corn. A sister height, Calascibetta, raised nearly to an equal altitude, keeps ward over the same valley; and from their summits the whole of Sicily is visible. Here in old days Demeter from her rock-built temple could survey vast tracts of hill and dale, breaking downwards to the sea and undulating everywhere with harvest. The much praised lake and vale of Enna* are now a desolate sulphur dis-

* Cicero's description of Enna is still accurate: "Enna is placed in a very lofty and exposed situation, at the top of which is a tableland and never-failing supply of springs. The whole site is cut off from access, and pre-

trict, void of beauty, with no flowers to tempt Proserpine. Yet the landscape is eminently noble because of its breadth—bare naked hills stretching in every direction to the sea that girdles Sicily—peak rising above peak and town-capped eyrie over eyrie—while Etna, wreathed with snow, and purple with the peculiar colour of its coal-black lava seen through light-irradiated air, sleeps far off beneath a crown of clouds. Upon the corn-fields in the centre of this landscape the multitudes of the Infidels were smitten hip and thigh by the handful of Christian warriors. Yet the victory was by no means a decisive one. The Saracens swarmed round the Norman fortress of Troina; where, during a severe winter, Roger and his young wife, Judith of Evreux, whom he had loved in Normandy, and who journeyed to marry him amid the din of battles, had but one cloak to protect them both from the cold. The traveller, who even in April has experienced the chill of a high-set Sicilian village, will not be inclined to laugh at the hardships revealed by this little incident. Yet the Normans, one and all, were stanch. A victory over their assailants in the spring gave them courage to push their arms as

cipitous." But when he proceeds to say, "many groves and lakes surround it and luxuriant flowers through all the year," we cannot follow him. The only quality which Enna has not lost is the impregnable nature of its cliffs. A few poplars and thorns are all that remain of its forests. Did we not know that the myth of Demeter and Persephone was a poem of seed-time and harvest, we might be tempted, while sitting on the crags of Castro Giovanni and looking toward the lake, to fancy that in old days a village dependent upon Enna, and therefore called her daughter, might have occupied the site of the lake, and that this village might have been withdrawn into the earth by the volcanic action which produced the cavity. Then people would have said that Demeter had lost Persephone and sought her vainly through all the cities of Sicily: and if this happened in spring, Persephone might well have been thought to have been gathering flowers at the time when Hades took her to himself. So easy and yet so dangerous is it to rationalise a legend.

far as the river Himera and beyond the Simeto, while a defeat of fifty thousand Saracens by four hundred Normans at Cerami opened the way at last to Palermo. Reading of these engagements, we are led to remember how Gelon smote his Punic foes upon the Himera, and Timoleon arrayed Greeks by the ten against Carthaginians by the thousand on the Crimisus. The battle-fields are scarcely altered; the combatants are as unequally matched, and represent analogous races. It is still the combat of a few heroic Europeans against the hordes of Asia. In the battle of Cerami it is said that St George fought visibly on horseback before the Christian band, like that wide-winged chivalrous archangel whom Spinello Aretino painted beside Sant' Efeso in the press of men upon the walls of the Pisan Campo Santo.

The capture of Palermo cost the Normans another eight years, part of which was spent according to their national tactics in plundering expeditions, part in the subjugation of Catania and other districts, part in the blockade of the capital by sea and land. After the fall of Palermo, it only remained for Roger to reduce isolated cities—Taormina, Syracuse,* Girgenti, and Castro Giovanni—to his sway. The last-named and strongest hold of the Saracens fell into his hands by the treason of Ibu-Hamûd in 1087, and thus, after thirty years' continual effort, the two brothers were at last able to divide the island between them. The lion's share, as was due, fell to Roger, who styled himself Great Count of Sicily and Calabria. In 1098, Urban II., a politician of the school of Cluny, who well understood the scope of Hildebrand's plan for subjecting Europe to the court of Rome, rewarded Roger for his zeal in the service of

* In this siege, as in that of the Athenians, and of the Saracens 878 A.D., decisive engagements took place in the great harbour.

the Church with the title of Hereditary Apostolical Legate. The Great Count was now on a par with the most powerful monarchs of Europe. In riches he exceeded all; so that he was able to wed one daughter to the King of Hungary, another to Conrad, King of Italy, a third to Raimond, Count of Provence and Toulouse, dowering them all with imperial munificence.

Hale and vigorous, his life was prolonged through a green old age until his seventieth year; when he died in 1101, he left two sons by his third wife, Adelaide. Roger, the younger of the two, destined to succeed his father, and (on the death of his cousin, William, Duke of Apulia, in 1127) to unite South Italy and Sicily under one crown, was only four years old at the death of the Great Count. Inheriting all the valour and intellectual qualities of his family, he rose to even higher honour than his predecessors. In 1130 he assumed the style of King of Sicily, no doubt with the political purpose of impressing his Mussulman subjects; and nine years later, when he took Innocent captive at San Germano, he forced from the half-willing pontiff a confirmation of this title as well as the investiture of Apulia, Calabria, and Capua. The extent of his sway is recorded in the line engraved upon his sword :—

"Appulus et Calaber Siculus mihi servit et Afer."

King Roger died in 1154, and bequeathed his kingdoms to his son William, surnamed the Bad; who in his turn left them to a William, called the Good, in 1166. The second William died in 1189, transmitting his possessions by will to Constance, wife of the Suabian emperor. These two Williams, the last of the Hauteville monarchs of Sicily, were not altogether unworthy of their Norman origin. William the Bad could rouse himself from the sloth of

his seraglio to head an army; William the Good, though feeble in foreign policy, and no general, administered the state with clemency and wisdom.

Sicily under the Normans offered the spectacle of a singularly hybrid civilisation. Christians and Northmen, adopting the habits and imbibing the culture of their Mussulman subjects, ruled a mixed population of Greeks, Arabs, Berbers, and Italians. The language of the princes was French; that of the Christians in their territory, Greek and Latin; that of their Mahommedan subjects, Arabic. At the same time the Scandinavian Sultans of Palermo did not cease to play an active part in the affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, of Europe. The children of the Vikings, though they spent their leisure in harems, exercised, as hereditary Legates of the Holy See, a peculiar jurisdiction in the Church of Sicily. They dispensed benefices to the clergy, and assumed the mitre and dalmatic, together with the sceptre and the crown, as symbols of their authority in Church as well as State. As a consequence of this confusion of nationalities in Sicily, we find French and English ecclesiastics* mingling at court with Moorish freedmen and Oriental odalisques, Apulian captains fraternising with Greek corsairs, Jewish physicians in attendance on the person of the prince, and Arabian poets eloquent in his praises. The very money with which Roger subsidised his Italian allies, was stamped with Cuphic letters,† and there is reason to believe that

* The English Gualterio Offamilio, or Walter of the Mill, Archbishop of Palermo during the reign of William the Good, by his intrigues brought about the match between Constance and Henry VI. Richard Palmer at the same time was Bishop of Syracuse. Stephen des Rotrous, a Frenchman of the Counts of Perche, preceded Walter of the Mill in the Arch See of Palermo.

† Frederick Barbarossa's soldiers are said to have bidden the Romans:

the reproach against Frederick of being a false coiner arose from his adopting the Eastern device of plating copper pieces to pass for silver. The commander of Roger's navies and his chief minister of state was styled, according to Oriental usage, Emir or Ammiraglio. George of Antioch, who swept the shores of Africa, the Morea, and the Black Sea, in his service, was a Christian of the Greek Church, who had previously held an office of finance under Temim Prince of Mehdia. The workers in his silk factories were slaves from Thebes and Corinth. The pages of his palace were Sicilian or African eunuchs. His charters ran in Arabic as well as Greek and Latin. His jewellers engraved the rough gems of the Orient with Christian mottoes in Semitic characters.* His architects were Mussulmans who adapted their native style to the requirements of Christian ritual, and inscribed the walls of cathedrals with catholic legends in the Cuphic language. The predominant characteristic of Palermo was Orientalism. Religious toleration was extended to the Mussulmans, so that the two creeds, Christian and Mahommedan, flourished side by side. The Saracens had their own quarters in the towns, their mosques and schools, and Cadis for the administration of petty justice. French and Italian women in Palermo adopted the Oriental fashions of dress. The administration of justice, again, was conducted on Eastern principles. In nothing had the Mussulmans shown greater genius than in their system of internal government. Count

"Take this German iron in change for Arab gold. This pay your master gives you, and this is how Franks win empire."—*Amari*, vol. iii. p. 468.

* The embroidered skullcap of Constance of Aragon, wife of Frederick II., in the sacristy of the cathedral at Palermo, is made of gold thread thickly studded with pearls and jewels—rough sapphires and carbuncles, among which may be noticed a red cornelian engraved in Arabic with this sentence, "In Christ, God, I put my hope."

Roger found a machinery of taxation in full working order, officers acquainted with the resources of the country, books and schedules constructed on the principles of strictest accuracy, a whole bureaucracy, in fact, ready to his use. By applying this machinery he became the richest potentate in Europe, at a time when the northern monarchs were dependent upon feudal aids and precarious revenues from crown lands. In the same way, the Saracens bequeathed to the Normans the court system, which they in turn had derived from the princes of Persia and the example of Constantinople. Roger found it convenient to continue that organisation of pages, chamberlains, ushers,* secretaries, viziers, and masters of the wardrobe, invested each with some authority of state according to his rank, which confined the administration of an Eastern kingdom to the walls of the palace.* At Palermo, Europe saw the first instance of a court not wholly unlike that which Versailles afterwards became. The intrigues which endangered the throne and liberty of William the Bad, and which perplexed the policy of William the Good, were court-conspiracies of a kind common enough at Constantinople. In this court life men of letters and erudition played a

* The Arabic title of *Kâid*, which originally was given to a subordinate captain of the guard, took a wide significance at the Norman Court. Latinised to *gaytus*, and Grecised under the form of κάιτος, it frequently occurs in chronicles and diplomas to denote a high minister of state. Matteo of Ajello, who exercised so powerful an influence over the policy of William the Good, heading the Mussulman and national party against the great ecclesiastics who were intriguing to draw Sicily into the entanglements of European diplomacy, was a Kâid. Matteo favoured the cause of Tancred, Walter of the Mill espoused that of the Germans, during the war of succession which followed upon William's death. The barons of the realm had to range themselves under these two leaders—to such an extent were the affairs of state in Sicily within the grasp of courtiers and churchmen.

first part three centuries before Petrarch taught the princes of Italy to respect the pen of a poet.

King Roger, of whom the court geographer Edrisi writes that "he did more sleeping than any other man waking," was surrounded during his leisure moments, beneath the palm-groves of Favara, with musicians, historians, travellers, mathematicians, poets, and astrologers of Oriental breeding. At his command Ptolemy's Optics were translated into Latin from the Arabic. The prophecies of the Erythrean Sibyl were rendered accessible in the same way. His respect for the occult sciences was proved by his disinterring the bones of Virgil from their resting-place at Posilippo, and placing them in the Castel dell' Uovo, in order that he might have access through necromancy to the spirit of the Roman wizard. It may be remembered in passing, that Palermo in one of her mosques already held suspended between earth and air the supposed relics of Aristotle. Such were the saints of modern culture in its earliest dawning. While Venice was robbing Alexandria of the body of St Mark, Palermo and Naples placed themselves beneath the protection of a philosopher and a poet. But Roger's greatest literary work was the compilation of a treatise of universal geography. Fifteen years were devoted to the task; and the manuscript, in Arabic, drawn up by the philosopher Edrisi, appeared only six weeks before the king's death in 1154. This book, called "The Book of Roger, or the Delight of whoso loves to make the Circuit of the World," was based upon the previous labours of twelve geographers, classical and Mussulman. But aiming at greater accuracy than could be obtained by a merely literary compilation, Roger caused pilgrims, travellers, and merchants of all countries to be assembled for conference and examination before him. Their

accounts were sifted and collated. Edrisi held the pen while Roger questioned. Measurements and distances were carefully compared; and a vast silver disc was constructed, on which all the seas, islands, continents, plains, rivers, mountain ranges, cities, roads and harbours of the known world were delineated. The text supplied an explanatory description of this map, with tables of the products, habits, races, religions, and qualities, both physical and moral, of all climates. The precious metal upon which the map was drawn proved its ruin, and the Geography remained in the libraries of Arab scholars. Yet this was one of the first great essays of practical exploration and methodical statistic, to which the genius of the Norseman and the Arab each contributed a quota. The Arabians, by their primitive nomadic habits, by the necessities of their system of taxation, by their predilection for astrology, by their experience as pilgrims, merchants, and poets errant, were specially qualified for the labour of geographical investigation. Roger supplied the unbounded curiosity and restless energy of his Scandinavian temper, the kingly comprehensive intellect of his race, and the authority of a prince who was powerful enough to compel the services of qualified collaborators.

The architectural works of the Normans in Palermo reveal the same ascendancy of Arab culture. San Giovanni degli Eremiti, with its low white rounded domes, is nothing more or less than a little mosque adapted to the rites of Christians.* The country palaces of the Zisa and the Cuba, built by the two Williams, retain their ancient Moorish character. Standing beneath the fretted arches of the hall of the Zisa, through

* Tradition asserts that the tocsin of this church gave the signal in Palermo to the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers.

which a fountain flows within a margin of carved marble, and looking on the landscape from its open porch, we only need to reconstruct in fancy the green gardens and orange-groves, where fair-haired Normans whiled away their hours among black-eyed odalisques and graceful singing boys from Persia. Amid a wild tangle of olive and lemon trees overgrown with scarlet passion-flowers the pavilion of the Cubola, built of hewn stone and open at each of its four sides, still stands much as it stood when William II. paced through flowers from his palace of the Cuba, to enjoy the freshness of the evening by the side of its fountain. The views from all these Saracenic villas over the fruitful valley of the Golden Horn, and the turrets of Palermo, and the mountains and the distant sea, are ineffably delightful. When the palaces were new—when the gilding and the frescoes still shone upon their honeycombed ceilings, when their mosaics glittered in noonday twilight, and their amber-coloured masonry was set in shade of pines and palms, and the cool sound of rivulets made music in their courts and gardens, they must have well deserved their Arab titles of "Sweet Waters" and "The Glory" and "The Paradise of Earth."

But the true splendour of Palermo, that which makes this city one of the most glorious of the south, is to be sought in its churches—in the mosaics of the Cappella Palatina founded by King Roger, in the vast aisles and cloisters of Monreale built by King William the Good at the instance of his Chancellor Matteo,* in the Cathedral of Palermo begun by Offamilio, and in the Martorana dedicated by George the Admiral. These triumphs of ecclesiastical architecture, none the less splendid be-

* Matteo of Ajello induced William to found an archbishopric at Monreale in order to spite his rival Offamilio.

cause they cannot be reduced to rule or assigned to any single style, were the work of Saracen builders assisted by Byzantine, Italian, and Norman craftsmen. The genius of Latin Christianity determined the basilica shape of the Cathedral of Monreale. Its bronze doors were wrought by smiths of Trani and Pisa. Its walls were incrusted with the mosaics of Constantinople. The woodwork of its roof, and the emblazoned patterns in porphyry and serpentine and glass and smalto, which cover its whole surface, were designed by Oriental decorators. Norman sculptors added their dog-tooth and chevron to the mouldings of its porches; Greeks, Frenchmen, and Arabs may have tried their skill in turn upon the multitudinous ornaments of its cloister capitals. "The like of which church," said Lucius III. in 1182, "hath not been constructed by any king even from ancient times, and such an one as must compel all men to admiration." These words remain literally and emphatically true. Other cathedrals may surpass that of Monreale in sublimity, simplicity, bulk, strength, or unity of plan. None can surpass it in the strange romance with which the memory of its many artificers invests it. None again can exceed it in richness and glory, in the gorgeousness of a thousand decorative elements subservient to one controlling thought. "It is evident," says Fergusson in his history of architecture, "that all the architectural features in the building were subordinate in the eyes of the builders to the mosaic decorations, which cover every part of the interior, and are in fact the glory and the pride of the edifice, and alone entitle it to rank among the finest of mediæval churches." The whole of the Christian history is depicted in this series of mosaics; but on first entering, one form alone compels attention. The semi-dome of the eastern apse

above the high altar is entirely filled with a gigantic half-length figure of Christ. He raises his right hand to bless, and with his left holds an open book on which is written in Greek and Latin, "I am the Light of the world." His face is solemn and severe, rather than mild or piteous; and round his nimbus runs the legend *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ.* Below him on a smaller scale are ranged the archangels and the mother of the Lord, who holds the child upon her knees. Thus Christ appears twice upon this wall, once as the Omnipotent Wisdom, the Word by whom all things were made, and once as God deigning to assume a shape of flesh and dwell with men. The magnificent image of supreme Deity seems to fill with a single influence and to dominate the whole building. The house with all its glory is His. He dwells there like Pallas in her Parthenon or Zeus in his Olympian temple. To left and right over every square inch of the cathedral blaze mosaics, which portray the story of God's dealings with the human race from the Creation downwards, together with those angelic beings and saints, who symbolise each in his own degree some special virtue granted to mankind. The walls of the fane are therefore an open book of history, theology, and ethics for all men to read.

The superiority of mosaics over fresco as an architectural adjunct on this gigantic scale is apparent at a glance in Monreale. Permanency of splendour and glowing richness of tone are all on the side of the mosaics. Their true rival is painted glass. The jewelled churches of the south are constructed for the display of coloured surfaces illuminated by sunlight falling on them from narrow windows, just as those of the north—Rheims, for example, or Le Mans—are built

for the transmission of light through a variegated medium of transparent hues. The painted windows of a northern cathedral find their proper counterpart in the mosaics of the south. The Gothic architect strove to obtain the greatest amount of translucent surface. The Byzantine builder directed his attention to securing just enough light for the illumination of his glistening walls. The radiance of the northern church was similar to that of flowers or sunset clouds or jewels. The glory of the southern temple was that of dusky gold and gorgeous needlework. The north needed acute brilliancy as a contrast to external greyness. The south found rest from the glare and glow of noon-day in these sombre splendours. Thus Christianity, both of the south and of the north, decked her shrines with colour. Not so the Paganism of Hellas. With the Greeks, colour, though used in architecture, was severely subordinated to sculpture; toned and modified to a calculated harmony with actual nature, it did not, as in a Christian church, create a world beyond the world, a paradise of supersensual ecstasy, but remained within the limits of the known. Light falling upon carved forms of gods and heroes, bathing clear-cut columns and sharp bas-reliefs in simple lustre, was enough for the Phœbean rites of Hellas. Though we know that red and blue and green and gilding were employed to accentuate the mouldings of Greek temples, yet neither the gloomy glory of mosaics nor the gemmed fretwork of storied windows was needed to attune the souls of Hellenic worshippers to devotion.

Less vast than Monreale, but even more beautiful, because the charm of mosaic increases in proportion as the surface it covers may be compared to the interior of a casket, is the Cappella Palatina of the royal palace in

Palermo. Here, again, the whole design and ornament are Arabo - Byzantine. Saracenic pendentives with Cuphic legends incrust the richly painted ceiling of the nave. The roofs of the apses and the walls are coated with mosaics, in which the Bible history, from the dove that brooded over Chaos to the lives of St Peter and St Paul, receives a grand though formal presentation. Beneath the mosaics are ranged slabs of grey marble, edged and divided with delicate patterns of inserted glass, resembling drapery with richly embroidered fringes. The floor is inlaid with circles of serpentine and porphyry encased in white marble, and surrounded by winding bands of Alexandrine work. Some of these patterns are restricted to the five tones of red, green, white, black, and pale yellow. Others add turquoise blue, and emerald, and scarlet, and gold. Not a square inch of the surface—floor, roof, walls, or cupola—is free from exquisite gemmed work of precious marbles. A candelabrum of fanciful design, combining lions devouring men and beasts, cranes, flowers, and winged genii, stands by the pulpit. Lamps of chased silver hang from the roof. The cupola blazes with gigantic archangels, stationed in a ring beneath the supreme figure and face of Christ. Some of the Ravenna churches are more historically interesting, perhaps, than this little masterpiece of the mosaic art. But none is so rich in detail and lustrous in effect. It should be seen at night, when the lamps are lighted in a pyramid around the sepulchre of the dead Christ on Holy Thursday, when partial gleams strike athwart the tawny gold of the arches, and fall upon the profile of a priest declaiming in voluble Italian to a listening crowd.

Such are a few of the monuments which still remain to show of what sort was the mixed culture of Normans,

Saracens, Italians, and Greeks at Palermo. In scenes like these the youth of Frederick II. was passed:—for at the end, while treating of Palermo, we are bound to think again of the Emperor who inherited from his German father the ambition of the Hohenstauffens, and from his Norman mother the fair fields and Oriental traditions of Sicily. The strange history of Frederick—an intellect of the eighteenth century born out of date, a cosmopolitan spirit in the age of Saint Louis, the crusader who conversed with Moslem sages on the threshold of the Holy Sepulchre, the Sultan of Lucera* who persecuted Paterini while he respected the superstition of Saracens, the anointed successor of Charlemagne, who carried his harem with him to the battle-fields of Lombardy, and turned Infidels loose upon the provinces of Christ's Vicar—would be inexplicable, were it not that Palermo still reveals in all her monuments the *genius loci* which gave spiritual nurture to this phœnix among kings. From his Mussulman teachers Frederick derived the philosophy to which he gave a vogue in Europe. From his Arabian predecessors he learned the arts of internal administration and finance, which he transmitted to the princes of Italy. In imitation of Oriental courts, he adopted the practice of verse composition, which gave the first impulse to Italian literature. His Grand Vizier, Piero Delle Vigne, set an example to

* Charles of Anjou gave this nickname to Manfred, who carried on the Siculo-Norman tradition. Frederick, it may here be mentioned, had transferred his Saracen subjects of the vale of Mazara to Lucera in the Capitanate. He employed them as trusty troops in his warfare with the Popes and preaching friars. Nothing shows the confusion of the century in matters ecclesiastical and religious more curiously than that Frederick, who conducted a crusade and freed the Holy Sepulchre, should not only have tolerated the religion of Mussulmans, but also have armed them against the Head of the Church. What we are apt to regard as religious questions really belonged at that period to the sphere of politics.

Petrarch, not only by composing the first sonnet in Italian, but also by showing to what height a low-born secretary versed in art and law might rise. In a word, the zeal for liberal studies, the luxury of life, the religious indifferentism, the bureaucratic system of state government, which mark the age of the Italian Renaissance, found their first manifestation within the bosom of the middle ages in Frederick. While our King John was signing Magna Charta, Frederick had already lived long enough to comprehend, at least in outline, what is meant by the spirit of modern culture.* It is true that the so-called Renaissance followed slowly and by tortuous paths upon the death of Frederick. The Church obtained a complete victory over his family, and succeeded in extinguishing the civilisation of Sicily. Yet the fame of the Emperor who transmitted questions of sceptical philosophy to Arab sages, who conversed familiarly with men of letters, who loved splendour and understood the arts of refined living, survived both long and late in Italy. His power, his wealth, his liberality of soul and lofty aspirations, formed the theme of many a tale and poem. Dante places him in hell among the heresiarchs; and truly the splendour of his supposed infidelity found for him a goodly following. Yet Dante dates the rise of Italian literature from the blooming period of the Sicilian Court. Frederick's unorthodoxy proved no drawback to his intellectual influence. More than any other man of mediæval times he contributed, if only as the memory of a mighty name, to the progress of civilised humanity.

Let us take leave both of Frederick and of Palermo, that centre of converging influences which was his cradle,

* It is curious to note that in this year 1215, the date of Magna Charta, Frederick took the Cross at Aix-la-Chapelle.

in the cathedral where he lies gathered to his fathers. This church, though its rich sun-browned yellow* reminds one of the tone of Spanish buildings, is like nothing one has seen elsewhere. Here even more than at Monreale the eye is struck with a fusion of styles. The western towers are grouped into something like the clustered sheafs of the Caen churches: the windows present Saracenic arches: the southern porch is covered with foliated incrustations of a late and decorative Gothic style: the exterior of the apse combines Arabic inlaid patterns of black and yellow with the Greek honeysuckle: the western door adds Norman dog-tooth and chevron to the Saracenic billet. Nowhere is any one tradition firmly followed. The whole wavers and yet is beautiful—like the immature ecclecticism of the culture which Frederick himself endeavoured to establish in his southern kingdoms. Inside there is no such harmony of blended voices: all the strange tongues, which speak together on the outside, making up a music in which the far North, and ancient Byzance, and the delicate East sound each a note, are hushed. The frigid silence of the Palladian style reigns there—simple indeed and dignified, but lifeless as the century in which it flourished. Yet there, in a side chapel near the western door, stand the porphyry sarcophagi which shrine the bones of the Hautevilles and their representatives. There sleeps King Roger—"Dux Strenuus et

* Nearly all cities have their own distinctive colour. That of Venice is a pearly white suggestive of every hue in delicate abeyance, and that of Florence is a sober brown. Palermo displays a rich yellow ochre passing at the deepest into orange, and at the lightest into primrose. This is the tone of the soil, of sun-stained marble, and of the rough ashlar masonry of the chief buildings. Palermo has none of the glaring whiteness of Naples, nor yet of that particoloured gradation of tints, which adds gaiety to the grandeur of Genoa.

primus Rex Siciliæ"—with his daughter Constance in her purple chest beside him. Henry VI. and Frederick II. and Constance of Aragon complete the group, which surpasses for interest all sepulchral monuments—even the tombs of the Scaligers at Verona—except only, perhaps, the statues of the nave of Innspruck. Very sombre and stately are these porphyry resting-places of princes born in the purple, assembled here from lands so distant—from the craggy heights of Hohenstauffen, from the green orchards of Cotentin, from the dry hills of Aragon. They sleep, and the centuries pass by. Rude hands break open the granite lids of their sepulchres, to find tresses of yellow hair and fragments of imperial mantles, embroidered with the hawks and stags the royal hunter loved. The church in which they lie, changes with the change of taste in architecture and the manners of successive ages. But the huge stone arks remain unmoved, guarding their freight of mouldering dust beneath gloomy canopies of stone, that temper the sunlight as it streams from the chapel windows.

SYRACUSE AND GIRGENTI.

THE traveller in Sicily is constantly reminded of classical history and literature. While tossing, it may be, at anchor in the port of Trapani, and wondering when the tedious Libeccio will release him, he must perforce remember that here Æneas instituted the games for Anchises. Here Mnestheus and Gyas and Sergestus and Cloanthus raced their galleys: on yonder little isle the Centaur struck; and that was the rock which received the dripping Menœtes :—

> "Illum et labentem Teucri et risere natantem,
> Et salsos rident revomentem pectore fluctus."

Or crossing a broken bridge at night in the lumbering diligence, guarded by infantry with set bayonets, and wondering on which side of the ravine the brigands are in ambush, he suddenly calls to mind that this torrent was the ancient Halycus, the border between Greeks and Carthaginians, established of old, and ratified by Timoleon after the battle of the Crimisus. Among the bare grey hills of Segeste his thoughts revert to that strange story told by Herodotus of Philippus, the young soldier of Crotona, whose beauty was so great, that when the Segesteans found him slain among their foes, they raised the corpse and burned it on a pyre of honour, and built a hero's temple over the urn that held his ashes. The first sight of Etna makes us cry with Theocritus, *Αἴτνα*

μᾶτερ ἐμά. . . πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα. The solemn heights of Castro Giovanni bring lines of Ovid to our lips:—

> "Haud procul Hennæis lacus est a mœnibus altæ
> Nomine Pergus aquæ. Non illo plura Caystros
> Carmina cygnorum labentibus audit in undis.
> Silva coronat aquas, cingens latus omne; suisque
> Frondibus ut velo Phœbeos summovet ignes.
> Frigora dant rami, Tyrios humus humida flores.
> Perpetuum ver est."

We look indeed in vain for the leafy covert and the purple flowers that tempted Proserpine. The place is barren now: two solitary cypress-trees mark the road which winds downwards from a desolate sulphur mine, and the lake is clearly the crater of an extinct volcano. Yet the voices of old poets are not mute. "The rich Virgilian rustic measure" recalls a long-since buried past. Even among the wavelets of the Faro we remember Homer, scanning the shore if haply somewhere yet may linger the wild fig-tree which saved Ulysses from the whirlpool of Charybdis. At any rate we cannot but exclaim with Goethe, "Now all these coasts, gulfs, and creeks, islands and peninsulas, rocks and sand-banks, wooded hills, soft meadows, fertile fields, neat gardens, hanging grapes, cloudy mountains, constant cheerfulness of plains, cliffs and ridges, and the surrounding sea, with such manifold variety are present in my mind; now is the 'Odyssey' for the first time become to me a living world." But rich as the whole of Sicily may be in classical associations, two places, Syracuse and Girgenti, are pre-eminent for the power of bringing the Greek past forcibly before us. Their interest is of two very different kinds. Girgenti still displays the splendour of temples placed upon a rocky cornice between sea and olive-groves. Syracuse has nothing to show but the scene of world-important actions. Yet

the great deeds recorded by Thucydides, the conflict between eastern and western Hellas which ended in the annihilation of the bright, brief, brilliant reality of Athenian empire, remain so clearly written on the hills and harbours and marsh-lands of Syracuse, that no place in the world is topographically more memorable. The artist, whether architect, or landscape-painter, or poet, finds full enjoyment at Girgenti. The historian must be exacting indeed in his requirements if he is not satisfied with Syracuse.

What has become of Syracuse, "the greatest of Greek cities and the fairest of all cities" even in the days of Cicero? Scarcely one stone stands upon another of all those temples and houses. The five towns which were included by the walls, have now shrunk to the little island which the first settlers named Ortygia, where the sacred fountain of Arethusa seemed to their home-loving hearts to have followed them from Hellas.* Nothing survives but a few columns of Athene's temple built into a Christian church, with here and there the marble masonry of a bath or the Roman stonework of an amphitheatre. There are not even any mounds or deep deposits of rubble mixed with pottery to show here once a town had been.† *Etiam periere ruinæ.* The vast city, devastated for the last time by the Saracens in 878 A.D., has been reduced to dust and swept by the scirocco into the sea. This is the explanation of its utter ruin. The stone of Syracuse is friable and easily disintegrated. The petulant moist wind of the

* The fountain of Arethusa, recently rescued from the washerwomen of Syracuse, is shut off from the Great Harbour by a wall and planted with papyrus. Taste has not been displayed in the bear-pit architecture of its circular enclosure.

† This is not strictly true of Achradina, where some *débris* may still be found worth excavating.

south-east corrodes its surface; and when it falls, it crumbles to powder. Here, then, the elements have had their will unchecked by such sculptured granite as in Egypt resists the mounded sand of the desert, or by such marble colonnades as in Athens have calmly borne the insults of successive sieges. What was hewn out of the solid rock—the semicircle of the theatre, the street of the tombs with its deeply dented chariot-ruts, the gigantic quarries from which the material of the metropolis was scooped, the catacombs which burrow for miles underground—alone prove how mighty must have been the Syracuse of Dionysius. Truly "the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity." Standing on the beach of the Great Harbour or the Bay of Thapsus, we may repeat almost word by word Antipater's solemn lament over Corinth:—

"Where is thy splendour now, thy crown of towers,
Thy beauty visible to all men's eyes,
The gold and silver of thy treasuries,
Thy temples of blest gods, thy woven bowers
Where long-stoled ladies walked in tranquil hours,
Thy multitudes like stars that crowd the skies?
All, all are gone. Thy desolation lies
Bare to the night. The elemental powers
Resume their empire: on this lonely shore
Thy deathless Nereids, daughters of the sea,
Wailing 'mid broken stones unceasingly,
Like halcyons when the restless south winds roar,
Sing the sad story of thy woes of yore:
These plunging waves are all that 's left to thee."

Time, however, though he devours his children, cannot utterly destroy either the written record of illustrious deeds or the theatre of their enactment. Therefore, with Thucydides in hand, we may still follow the events

of that Syracusan siege which decided the destinies of Greece, and by the fall of Athens, raised Sparta, Macedonia, and finally Rome to the hegemony of the civilised world.

There are few students of Thucydides and Grote who would not be surprised by the small scale of the cliffs, and the gentle incline of Epipolæ—the rising ground above the town of Syracuse, upon the slope of which the principal operations of the Athenian siege took place.* Maps, and to some extent also the language of Thucydides, who talks of the προσβάσεις, or practicable approaches to Epipolæ, and the κρημνοί, or precipices by which it was separated from the plain, would lead one to suppose that the whole region was on each hand rocky and abrupt. In reality it is extremely difficult to distinguish the rising ground of Epipolæ upon the southern side from the plain, so very gradual is the line of ascent and so comparatively even is the rocky surface of the hill. Thucydides, in narrating the night attack of Demosthenes upon the lines of Gylippus (book vii. 43–45), lays stress upon the necessity of approaching Epipolæ from the western side by Euryâlus, and again asserts that during the hurried retreat of the Athenians great numbers died by leaping from the cliffs, while still more had to throw away their armour. At this time the Athenian army was encamped upon the shore of the Great Harbour, and held trenches and a wall that stretched from that side at least half way across Epipolæ. It seems therefore strange that, unless their move-

* Epipolæ is in shape a pretty regular isosceles triangle, of which the apex is Mongibellisi or Euryâlus, and the base Achradina or the northern quarter of the ancient city. Thucydides describes it as χωρίου ἀποκρήμνου τε καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως εὐθὺς κειμένου . . . ἐξήρτηται γὰρ τὸ ἄλλο χώριον καὶ μέχρι τῆς πόλεως ἐπικλινὲς τέ ἐστι καὶ ἐπιφανὲς πᾶν εἴσω· καὶ ὠνόμασται ὑπὸ τῶν Συρακοσίων διὰ τὸ ἐπιπολῆς τοῦ ἄλλου εἶναι Ἐπιπολαί (vi. 96).

ments were impeded by counterworks and lines of walls, of which we have no information, the troops of Demosthenes should not, at least in their retreat, have been able to pour down over the gentle descent of Epipolæ toward the Anapus, instead of returning to Euryâlus. Anyhow, we can scarcely discern cliffs of more than ten feet upon the southern slope of Epipolæ, nor can we understand why the Athenians should have been forced to take these in their line of retreat. There must have been some artificial defences of which we read nothing, and of which no traces now remain, but which were sufficient to prevent them from choosing their ground. Slight difficulties of this kind raise the question whether the wonderful clearness of Thucydides in detail was really the result of personal observation, or whether his graphic style enabled him to give the appearance of scrupulous accuracy. I incline to think that the author of the sixth and seventh books of the History must have visited Syracuse, and that if we could see his own map of Epipolæ, we should better be able to understand the difficulties of the backward night march of Demosthenes, by discovering that there was some imperative necessity for not descending, as seems natural, upon the open slope of the hill to the south. The position of Euryâlus at the extreme point called Mongibellisi is clear enough. Here the ground, which has been continually rising from the plateau of Achradina (the northern suburb of Syracuse), comes to an abrupt finish. Between Mongibellisi and the Belvedere hill beyond there is a deep depression, and the slope to Euryâlus either from the south or north is gradual. It was a gross piece of neglect on the part of Nikias not to have fortified this spot on his first investment of Epipolæ, instead of choosing Labdalum, which, wherever we may place it,

must have been lower down the hill to the east. For Euryâlus is the key to Epipolæ. It was here that Nikias himself ascended in the first instance, and that afterwards he permitted Gylippus to enter and raise the siege, and lastly that Demosthenes, by overpowering the insufficient Syracusan guard, got at night within the lines of the Spartan general. Thus the three most important movements of the siege were made upon Euryâlus. Dionysius, when he enclosed Epipolæ with walls, recognised the importance of the point, and fortified it with the castle which remains, and to which, as Colonel Leake believes, Archimedes, at the order of Hiero II., made subsequent additions. This castle is one of the most interesting Greek ruins extant. A little repair would make it even now a substantial place of defence, according to Greek tactics. Its deep foss is cut in the solid rock, and furnished with subterranean magazines for the storage of provisions. The three piles of solid masonry on which the drawbridge rested, still stand in the centre of this ditch. The oblique grand entrance to the foss descends by a flight of well-cut steps. The rock itself over which the fort was raised, is honeycombed with excavated passages for infantry and cavalry, of different width and height, so that one sort can be assigned to mounted horsemen and another to foot soldiers. The trap-doors which led from these galleries into the fortress, are provided with rests for ladders, that could be let down to help a sallying force, or drawn up to impede an advancing enemy. The inner court for stabled horses and the stations for the catapults are still in tolerable preservation. Thus the whole arrangement of the stronghold can be traced not dimly but distinctly. Being placed on the left side of the chief gate of Epipolæ, the occupants of the fort

could issue to attack a foe advancing toward that gate in the rear. At the same time the subterranean galleries enabled them to pour out upon the other side, if the enemy had forced an entrance, while the minor passages and trap-doors provided a retreat in case the garrison were overpowered in one of their offensive operations. The view from Euryâlus is extensive. To the left rises Etna, snowy, solitary, broadly vast, above the plain of Catania, the curving shore, Thapsus, and the sea. Syracuse itself, a thin white line between the harbour and the open sea, a dazzling streak between two blues, terminates the slope of Epipolæ, and on the right hand stretch the marshes of Anapus rich with vines and hoary with olives.

By far the most interesting localities of Syracuse are the Great Harbour and the stone quarries. When the sluggish policy and faint heart of Nikias had brought the Athenians to the verge of ruin, when Gylippus had entered the besieged city, and Plemmyrium had been wrested from the invaders, and Demosthenes had failed in his attack upon Epipolæ, and the blockading trenches had been finally evacuated, no hope remained for the armament of Athens except only in retreat by water. They occupied a palisaded encampment upon the shore of the harbour, between the mouth of the Anapus and the city; whence they attempted to force their way with their galleys to the open sea. Hitherto the Athenians had been supreme upon their own element; but now the Syracusans adopted tactics suited to the narrow basin in which the engagements had to take place. Building their vessels with heavy beaks, they crushed the lighter craft of the Athenians, which had no room for flank movements and rapid evolutions. A victory was thus

obtained by the Syracusan navy; the harbour was blockaded with chains by the order of Gylippus; the Athenians were driven back to their palisades upon the fever-haunted shore. Their only chance seemed to depend upon a renewal of the sea-fight in the harbour. The supreme moment arrived. What remained of the Athenian fleet, in numbers still superior to that of their enemies, steered straight for the mouth of the harbour. The Syracusans advanced from the naval stations of Ortygia to meet them. The shore was thronged with spectators, Syracusans tremulous with the expectation of a decisive success, Athenians on the tenter-hooks of hope and dread. In a short time the harbour became a confused mass of clashing triremes; the water beaten into bloody surf by banks of oars; the air filled with shouts from the combatants and exclamations from the lookers-on: *ὀλοφυρμός, βοή, νικῶντες, κρατούμενοι, ἄλλα ὅσα ἐν μεγάλῳ κινδύνῳ μέγα στρατόπεδον πολυειδῆ ἀναγκάζοιτο φθέγγεσθαι.* Then after a struggle, in which desperation gave energy to the Athenians, and ambitious hope inspired their foes with more than wonted vigour, the fleet of the Athenians was finally overwhelmed. The whole scene can be reproduced with wonderful distinctness; for the low shores of Plemmyrium, the city of Ortygia, the marsh of Lysimeleia, the hills above the Anapus, and the distant dome of Etna, are the same as they were upon that memorable day. Nothing has disappeared except the temple of Zeus Olympius and the buildings of Temenitis. What followed upon the night of that defeat is less easily realised. Thucydides, however, by one touch reveals the depth of despair to which the Athenians had sunk. They neglected to rescue the bodies of their dead from the Great Harbour, or to ask for a truce, according to hallowed Greek usage,

in order that they might perform the funeral rites. To such an extent was the army demoralised. Meanwhile within the city the Syracusans kept high festival, honouring their patron Herakles, upon whose day it happened that the battle had been fought. Nikias neglected this opportunity of breaking up his camp and retiring unmolested into the interior of the island. When after the delay of two nights and a day he finally began to move, the Syracusans had blockaded the roads. How his own division capitulated by the blood-stained banks of the Asinarus after a six days' march of appalling misery, and how that of Demosthenes surrendered in the olive-field of Polyzelus, is too well known. One of the favourite excursions from modern Syracuse takes the traveller in a boat over the sandy bar of the Anapus, beneath the old bridge which joined the Helorine road to the city, and up the river to its junction with the Cyane. This is the ground traversed by the army first in their attempted flight and then in their return as captives to Syracuse. Few, perhaps, who visit the spot, think as much of that last act in a world-historical tragedy, as of the picturesque compositions made by arundo donax, castor-oil plant, yellow flags, and papyrus, on the river-banks and promontories. Like miniature palm-groves these water-weeds stand green and golden against the bright blue sky, feathering above the boat which slowly pushes its way through clinging reeds. The huge red oxen of Sicily in the marsh on either hand toss their spreading horns and canter off knee-deep in ooze. Then comes the fountain of Cyane, a broad round well of water, thirty feet in depth, but quite clear, so that you can see the pebbles at the bottom and fishes swimming to and fro among the weeds. Papyrus-plants edge the pool; thick and tufted, they are

exactly such as one sees carved or painted upon Egyptian architecture of the Ptolemaic period.

With Thucydides still in hand, before quitting Syracuse we must follow the Athenian captives to their prison-grave. The Latomia de' Cappuccini is a place which it is impossible to describe in words, and of which no photographs give any notion. Sunk to the depth of a hundred feet below the level of the soil, with sides perpendicular and in many places as smooth as though the chisel had just passed over them, these vast excavations produce the impression of some huge subterranean gallery, widening here and there into spacious halls, the whole of which has been unroofed and opened to the air of heaven. It is a solemn and romantic labyrinth, where no wind blows rudely, and where orange-trees shoot upward luxuriantly to meet the light. The wild fig bursts from the living rock, mixed with lentisk-shrubs and pendent caper-plants. Old olives split the masses of fallen cliff with their tough, snakelike, slowly corded and compacted roots. Thin flames of pomegranate-flowers gleam amid foliage of lustrous green; and lemons drop unheeded from femininely fragile branches. There too the ivy hangs in long festoons, waving like tapestry to the breath of stealthy breezes; while under foot is a tangle of acanthus, thick curling leaves of glossiest green, surmounted by spikes of dull lilac blossoms. Wedges and columns and sharp teeth of the native rock rear themselves here and there in the midst of the open spaces to the sky, worn fantastically into notches and saws by the action of scirocco. A light yellow calcined by the sun to white is the prevailing colour of the quarries. But in shady places the limestone takes a curious pink tone of great beauty, like the interior of some sea-shells. The reflected lights too, and

half-shadows in their scooped-out chambers, make a wonderful natural chiaroscuro. The whole scene is now more picturesque in a sublime and grandiose style than forbidding. There is even one spot planted with magenta-coloured mesembrianthemums of dazzling brightness; and the air is loaded with the drowsy perfume of lemon-blossoms. Yet this is the scene of a great agony. This garden was once the Gethsemane of a nation, where 9000 free men of the proudest city of Greece were brought by an unexampled stroke of fortune to slavery, shame, and a miserable end. Here they dwindled away, worn out by wounds, disease, thirst, hunger, heat by day and cold by night, heart-sickness, and the insufferable stench of putrefying corpses. The pupils of Socrates, the admirers of Euripides, the orators of the Pnyx, the athletes of the Lyceum, lovers and comrades and philosophers, died here like dogs: and the dames of Syracuse stood doubtless on those parapets above, and looked upon them like wild beasts. What the Gorgo of Theocritus might have said to her friend Praxinoe on the occasion would be the subject for an idyll *à la* Browning! How often, pining in those great glaring pits, which were not then curtained with ivy or canopied by olive-trees, must the Athenians have thought with vain remorse of their own Rhamnusian Nemesis, the goddess who held scales adverse to the hopes of men, and bore the legend "Be not lifted up!" How often must they have watched the dawn walk forth fire-footed upon the edge of those bare crags, or the stars slide from east to west across the narrow space of sky! How they must have envied the unfettered clouds sailing in liquid ether, or traced the far flight of hawk and swallow, sighing, "Oh that I too had the wings of a bird!" The weary eyes turned upwards found

no change or respite, save what the frost of night brought to the fire of day, and the burning sun to the pitiless cold constellations.

A great painter, combining Doré's power over space and distance with the distinctness of Flaxman's design and the colouring of Alma Tadema, might possibly realise this agony of the Athenian captives in the stone quarries. The time of day chosen for the picture should be full noon, with its glare of light and sharply defined vertical shadows. The crannies in the straight sides of the quarry should here and there be tufted with a few dusty creepers and wild fig-trees. On the edge of the sky-line stand parties of Syracusan citizens with their wives and children, shaded by umbrellas, richly dressed, laughing and triumphing over the misery beneath. In the full foreground there are placed two figures. A young Athenian has just died of fever. His body lies stretched along the ground, the head resting on a stone, and the face turned to the sky. Beside him kneels an older warrior, sunburned and dry with thirst, but full as yet of vigour. He stares with wide despair-smitten eyes straight out, as though he had lately been stretched upon the corpse, but had risen at the sound of movement, or some supposed word of friends close by. His bread lies untasted near him, and the half-pint of water—his day's portion—has been given to bathe the forehead of his dying friend. They have stood together through the festival of leave-taking from Peiræus, through the battles of Epipolæ, through the retreat and the slaughter at the passage of the Asinarus. But now it has come to this, and death has found the younger. Perhaps the friend beside him remembers some cool wrestling-ground in far-off Athens, or some procession up the

steps of the Acropolis, where first they met. Anyhow his fixed gaze now shows that he has passed in thought at least beyond the hell around him. Not far behind should be ranged groups of haggard men, with tattered clothes and dulled or tigerish eyes, some dignified, some broken down by grief; while here and there newly fallen corpses, and in one hideous corner a great heap of abandoned dead, should point the ghastly words of Thucydides: *τῶν νεκρῶν ὁμοῦ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις ξυννενημένων.*

Every landscape has some moment of its own at which it should be seen for the first time. Mediæval cities, with their narrow streets and solemn spires, demand the twilight of a summer night. Mediterranean islands show their best in the haze of afternoon, when sea and sky and headland are bathed in aerial blue, and the mountains seem to be made of transparent amethyst. The first sight of the Alps should be taken at sunset from some point of vantage, like the terrace at Berne, or the castle walls of Salzburg. If these fortunate moments be secured, all after knowledge of locality and detail serves to fortify and deepen the impression of picturesque harmony. The mind has then conceived a leading thought, which gives ideal unity to scattered memories and invests the crude reality with an æsthetic beauty. The lucky moment for the landscape of Girgenti is half an hour past sunset in a golden after-glow. Landing at the port named after Empedocles, having caught from the sea some glimpses of temple-fronts emergent on green hill-slopes among almond-trees, with Pindar's epithet of "splendour-loving" in my mind, I rode on such an evening up the path which leads across the Drago to Girgenti. The way winds through deep-sunk lanes of rich amber

sandstone, hedged with cactus and dwarf-palm, and set with old gnarled olive-trees. As the sunlight faded, Venus shone forth in a luminous sky, and the deep yellows and purples overhead seemed to mingle with the heavy scent of orange-flowers from scarcely visible groves by the roadside. Saffron in the west and violet in the east met midway, composing a translucent atmosphere of mellow radiance, like some liquid gem — *dolce color d'oriental berillo.* Girgenti, far off and far up, gazing seaward, and rearing her topaz-coloured bastions into that gorgeous twilight, shone like the aerial vision of cities seen in dreams or imaged in the clouds. Hard and sharp against the sallow line of sunset, leaned grotesque shapes of cactuses like hydras, and delicate silhouettes of young olive-trees like sylphs: the river ran silver in the hollow, and the mountain-side on which the town is piled was solid gold. Then came the dirty dull interior of Girgenti, misnamed the magnificent. But no disenchantment could destroy the memory of that vision, and Pindar's φιλάγλαος Ἀκράγας remains in my mind a reality.*

The temples of Girgenti are at the distance of two miles from the modern town. Placed upon the edge of an irregular plateau which breaks off abruptly into cliffs of moderate height below them, they stand in a magnificent row between the sea and plain on one side, and the city and the hills upon the other. Their colour is that of dusky honey or dun amber; for they are not built of marble, but of sandstone, which at some not

* Lest I should seem to have overstated the splendour of this sunset view, I must remark that the bare dry landscape of the south is peculiarly fortunate in such effects. The local tint of the Girgenti rock is yellow. The vegetation on the hillside is sparse. There is nothing to prevent the colours of the sky being reflected upon the vast amber-tinted surface, which then glows with indescribable glory.

very distant geological period must have been a sea-bed. Oyster and scallop shells are imbedded in the roughly hewn masonry, while here and there patches of a red deposit, apparently of broken coralline, make the surface crimson. The vegetation against which the ruined colonnades are relieved, consists almost wholly of almond and olive trees, the bright green foliage of the one mingling with the greys of the other, and both enhancing the warm tints of the stone. This contrast of colours is very agreeable to the eye; yet when the temples were perfect it did not exist. There is no doubt that their surface was coated with a fine stucco, wrought to smoothness, toned like marble, and painted over with the blue and red and green decorations proper to the Doric style. This fact is a practical answer to those æsthetic critics who would fain establish that the Greeks practised no deception in their arts. The whole effect of the colonnades of Selinus and Girgenti must have been an illusion, and their surface must have needed no less constant reparation than the exterior of a Gothic cathedral. The sham jewellery frequently found in Greek tombs, and the curious mixture of marble with sandstone in the sculptures from Selinus, are other instances that Greeks no less than modern artists condescended to trickery for the sake of effect. In the series of the metopes from Selinus now preserved in the museum at Palermo, the flesh of the female persons is represented by white marble, while that of the men, together with the dresses and other accessories, is wrought of common stone. Yet the bas-reliefs in which this peculiarity occurs belong to the best period of Greek sculpture, and the groups are not unworthy for spirit and design to be placed by the side of the metopes of the Parthenon. Most beautiful, for

example, is the contrast between the young unarmed Hercules and the Amazon he overpowers. His naked man's foot grasps with the muscular energy of an athlete her soft and helpless woman's foot, the roughness of the sandstone and the smoothness of the marble really heightening the effect of difference.

Though ranged in a row along the same cornice, the temples of Girgenti, originally at least six in number, were not so disposed that any of their architectural lines should be exactly parallel. The Greeks disliked formality; the carefully calculated *asymmetreia* in the disposition of their groups of buildings, secured variety of effect as well as a broken surface for the display of light and shadow. This is very noticeable on the Acropolis of Athens, where, however regular may be the several buildings, all are placed at different angles to each other and the hill. Only two of the Girgenti temples survive in any degree of perfection—the so-called Concordia and the Juno Lacinia. The rest are but mere heaps of mighty ruins, with here and there a broken column, and in one place an angle of a pediment raised upon a group of pillars. The foundations of masonry which supported them and the drums of their gigantic columns are tufted with wild palm, aloe, asphodel, and crimson snap-dragon. Yellow blossoming sage, and mint, and lavender, and mignonette, sprout in the crevices where snakes and lizards harbour. The grass around is gemmed with blue pimpernel and convolvulus. Gladiolus springs amid the young corn-blades beneath the almond-trees; while a beautiful little iris makes the most unpromising dry places brilliant with its delicate greys and blues. In cooler and damper hollows, around the boles of old olives and under ruined arches, flourishes

the tender acanthus, and the roadsides are gaudy with a yellow daisy flower, which may perchance be the ἐλίχρυσος of Theocritus. Thus the whole scene is a wilderness of brightness, less radiant but more touching than when processions of men and maidens bearing urns and laurel-branches, crowned with ivy or with myrtle, paced along those sandstone roads, chanting pæans and prosodial hymns, toward the glistening porches and hypæthral cells.

The only temple about the name of which there can be no doubt, is that of Zeus Olympius. A prostrate giant who once with nineteen of his fellows helped to support the roof of this enormous fane, and who now lies in pieces among the asphodels, remains to prove that this was the building begun by the Agrigentines after the defeat of the Phœnicians at the Himera, when slaves were many and spoil was abundant, and Hellas both in Sicily and on the mainland felt a more than usual thrill of gratitude to their ancestral deity. The greatest architectural works of the island, the temples of Segeste and Selinus as well as those of Girgenti, were begun between this period and the Carthaginian invasion of 409 B.C. The victory of the Hellenes over the barbarians in 480 B.C. gave a vast impulse to their activity and wealth. After the disastrous incursion of the same foes seventy years later, the western Greek towns of the island received a check from which they never recovered. Many of their noblest buildings remained unfinished. The question which rises to the lips of all who contemplate the ruins of this gigantic temple and its compeer dedicated to Herakles is this, Who wrought the destruction of works so solid and enduring? For what purpose of spite or interest were those vast columns—in the very flutings of which a man can stand with ease—felled like forest pines? One sees the

mighty pillars lying as they sank, like swathes beneath the mower's scythe. Their basements are still in line. The drums which composed them have fallen asunder, but maintain their original relation to each other on the ground. Was it earthquake or the hand of man that brought them low? Poggio Bracciolini tells us that in the fifteenth century they were burning the marble buildings of the Roman Campagna for lime. We know that the Senator Brancaleone made havoc among the classic monuments occupied as fortresses by Frangipani and Savelli and Orsini. We understand how the Farnesi should have quarried the Coliseum for their palace. But here, at the distance of three miles from Girgenti, in a comparative desert, what army, or what band of ruffians, or what palace-builders could have found it worth their while to devastate mere mountains of sculptured sandstone? The Romans invariably respected Greek temples. The early Christians used them for churches:—and this accounts for the comparative perfection of the Concordia. It was in the age of the Renaissance that the ruin of Girgenti's noblest monuments occurred. The temple of Zeus Olympius was shattered in the fifteenth century, and in the next its fragments were used to build a breakwater. The demolition of such substantial edifices is as great a wonder as their construction. We marvel at the energy which must have been employed on their overthrow, no less than at the art which raised such blocks of stone and placed them in position.

While so much remains both at Syracuse and at Girgenti to recall the past, we are forced here, as at Athens, to feel how very little we really know about Greek life. We cannot bring it up before our fancy with any clearness, but rather in a sort of hazy dream, from which some luminous points emerge. The entrance of an

Olympian victor through the breach in the city walls of Girgenti, the procession of citizens conducting old Timoleon in his chariot to the theatre, the conferences of the younger Dionysius with Plato in his guarded palace-fort, the stately figure of Empedocles presiding over incantations in the marshes of Selinus, the austerity of Dion and his mystic dream, the first appearance of stubborn Gylippus with long Lacedæmonian hair in the theatre of Syracuse,—such picturesque pieces of history we may fairly well recapture. But what were the daily occupations of the Simætha of Theocritus? What was the state-dress of the splendid Queen Philistis, whose name may yet be read upon her seat, and whose face adorns the coins of Syracuse? How did the great altar of Zeus look, when the oxen were being slaughtered there by hundreds, in a place which must have been shambles and meat-market and temple all in one? What scene of architectural splendour met the eyes of the swimmers in the Piscina of Girgenti? How were the long hours of so many days of leisure occupied by the Greeks, who had each three pillows to his head in "splendour-loving Acragas"? Of what sort was the hospitality of Gellias? Questions like these rise up to tantalise us with the hopelessness of ever truly recovering the life of a lost race. After all the labour of the antiquary and the poet, nothing remains to be uttered but such moralisings as Sir Thomas Browne poured forth over the urns discovered at Old Walsingham: "What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits

except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators." Death reigns over the peoples of the past, and we must fain be satisfied to cry with Raleigh : "O eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of men, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *hic jacet*." Even so. Yet while the cadence of this august rhetoric is yet in our ears, another voice is heard as of the angel seated by a void and open tomb, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The spirit of Hellas is indestructible, however much the material existence of the Greeks be lost beyond recovery; for the life of humanity is not many but one, not parcelled into separate moments but continuous.

ETNA.

THE eruptions of Etna have blackened the whole land for miles in every direction. That is the first observation forced upon one in the neighbourhood of Catania, or Giarre, or Bronte. From whatever point of view you look at Etna, it is always a regular pyramid, with long and gradually sloping sides, broken here and there by the excrescence of minor craters and dotted over with villages. The summit crowned with snow, divided into peak and cone, girdled with clouds, and capped with smoke, that shifts shape as the wind veers, dominates a blue-black monstrous mass of out-poured lava. From the top of Monte Rosso, a subordinate volcano which broke into eruption in 1669, you can trace the fountain from which "the unapproachable river of purest fire" that nearly destroyed Catania, issued. You see it still, bubbling up like a frozen geyser from the flank of the mountain, whence the sooty torrent spreads, or rather sprawls, with jagged edges to the sea. The plain of Catania lies at your feet, threaded by the Simeto, bounded by the promontory of Syracuse and the mountains of Castro Giovanni. This huge amorphous blot upon the landscape may be compared to an ink-stain on a variegated tablecloth, or to the coal-districts marked upon a geological atlas, or to the heathen in a missionary map —the green and red and grey colours standing for Christians and Mahommedans and Jews of different

shades and qualities. The lava, where it has been cultivated, is reduced to fertile sand, in which vines and fig-trees are planted—their tender green foliage contrasting strangely with the sinister soil that makes them flourish. All the roads are black as jet, like paths leading to coal-pits, and the country-folk on mule-back plodding along them look like Arabs on an infernal Sahara. The very lizards which haunt the rocks are swart and smutty. Yet the flora of the district is luxuriant. The gardens round Catania, nestling into cracks and ridges of the stiffened flood, are marvellously brilliant with spurge and fennel and valerian. It is impossible to form a true conception of flower-brightness till one has seen these golden and crimson tints upon their ground of ebony, or to realise the blueness of the Mediterranean except in contrast with the lava where it breaks into the sea. Copses of frail oak and ash, undergrown with ferns of every sort; cactus-hedges, orange-trees grafted with lemons and laden with both fruits; olives of scarce two centuries' growth, and fig-trees knobbed with their sweet produce, overrun the sombre soil, and spread their boughs against the deep blue sea and the translucent amethyst of the Calabrian mountains. Underfoot, a convolvulus with large white blossoms, binding dingy stone to stone, might be compared to a rope of Desdemona's pearls upon the neck of Othello.

The villages are perhaps the most curious feature of this scenery. Their houses, rarely more than one story high, are walled, paved, and often roofed with the inflexible material which once was ruinous fire, and is now the servant of the men it threatened to destroy. The churches are such as might be raised in Hades to implacable Proserpine, such as one might dream of in a vision of the world turned into hell, such as Baudelaire in his

fiction of a metallic landscape might have imagined under the influence of hasheesh. Their flights of steps are built of sharply cut black lava blocks no feet can wear. Their door-jambs and columns and pediments and carved work are wrought and sculptured of the same gloomy masonry. How forbidding are the acanthus-scrolls, how grim the skulls and cross-bones on these portals! The bell-towers, again, are ribbed and beamed with black lava. A certain amount of the structure is whitewashed, which serves to relieve the funereal solemnity of the rest. In an Indian district each of these churches would be a temple, raised in vain propitiation to the demon of the fire above and below. Some pictures made by their spires in combination with the sad village-hovels, the snowy dome of Etna, and the ever-smiling sea, are quite unique in their variety of suggestion and wild beauty.

The people have a sorrow-smitten and stern aspect. Some of the men in the prime of life are grand and haughty, with the cast-bronze countenance of Roman emperors. But the old men bear rigid faces of carved basalt, gazing fixedly before them as though at some time or other in their past lives they had met Medusa: and truly Etna in eruption is a Gorgon, which their ancestors have oftentimes seen shuddering, and fled from terror-frozen. The white-haired old women, plying their spindle or distaff, or meditating in grim solitude, sit with the sinister set features of Fates by their doorways. The young people are very rarely seen to smile: they open hard, black, beaded eyes upon a world in which there is nothing for them but endurance or the fierceness of passions that delight in blood. Strangely different are these dwellers on the sides of Etna from the voluble, lithe sailors of Sciacca or Mazara, with their sunburnt skins and many-coloured garments.

The Val del Bove—a vast chasm in the flank of Etna, where the very heart of the volcano has been riven and its entrails bared—is the most impressive spot of all this region. The road to it leads from Zafferana (so called because of its crocus-flowers) along what looks like a series of black moraines, where the lava torrents pouring from the craters of Etna, have spread out, and reared themselves in stiffened ridges against opposing mountain buttresses. After toiling for about three hours over the dismal waste, a point between the native rock of Etna and the dead sea of lava is reached, which commands a prospect of the cone with its curling smoke, surmounting a caldron of some four thousand feet in depth and seemingly very wide. The whole of this space is filled with billows of blackness, wave on wave, crest over crest, and dyke by dyke, precisely similar to a gigantic glacier, swarthy and immovable. The resemblance of the lava flood to a glacier is extraordinarily striking. One can fancy oneself standing on the Belvedere at Macugnaga, or the Tacul point upon the Mer de Glace, in some nightmare, and finding to one's horror that the radiant snows and river-breeding ice-fields have been turned by a malignant deity to sullen, stationary cinders. It is a most hideous place, like a pit in Dante's Hell, disused for some unexplained reason, and left untenanted by fiends. The scenery of the moon, without atmosphere and without life, must be of this sort; and such, rolling round in space, may be some planet that has survived its own combustion. When the clouds, which almost always hang about the Val del Bove, are tumbling at their awful play around its precipices, veiling the sweet suggestion of distant sea and happier hills that should be visible, the horror of this view is aggravated. Breaking here

and there, the billows of mist disclose forlorn tracts of jet-black desolation, wicked, unutterable, hateful in their hideousness, with patches of smutty snow above, and downward-rolling volumes of murky smoke. Shakspere, when he imagined the damned spirits confined to "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice," divined the nature of a glacier; but what line could he have composed, adequate to shadow forth the tortures of a soul condemned to palpitate for ever between the ridges of this thirsty and intolerable sea of dead fire? If the world-spirit chose to assume for itself the form and being of a dragon, of like substance to this, impenetrable, invulnerable, unapproachable, would be its hide. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to picture these lava-lakes glowing, as they must have been, when first outpoured, the bellowing of the crater, the heaving and surging of the solid earth, the air obstructed with cinders and whizzing globes of molten rock. Yet in these throes of devilish activity, the Val del Bove would be less insufferable than in its present state of suspension, asleep, but threatening, ready to regurgitate its flame, but for a moment inert.

An hour's drive from Nicolosi or Zafferana, seaward, brings one into the richest land of "olive and aloe and maize and vine" to be found upon the face of Europe. Here, too, are laughing little towns, white, prosperous, and gleeful, the very opposite of those sad stations on the mountain flank. Every house in Aci Reale has its courtyard garden filled with orange-trees, and nespole, and fig-trees, and oleanders. From the grinning corbels that support the balconies hang tufts of gem-bright ferns and glowing clove-pinks. Pergolas of vines, bronzed in autumn, and golden green like chrysoprase beneath an April sun, fling their tendrils over white walls and

shady loggie. Gourds hang ripening in the steady blaze. Far and wide stretches a landscape rich with tilth and husbandry, boon Nature paying back to men tenfold for all their easy toil. The terrible great mountain sleeps in the distance, innocent of fire. I know not whether this land be more delightful in spring or autumn. The little flamelike flakes of brightness upon vines and fig-trees in April have their own peculiar charm. But in November the whole vast flank of Etna glows with the deep blue tone of steel; the russet woods are like a film of rust; the vine-boughs thrust living carbuncles against the sun. To this season, when the peculiar earth tints of Etna, its strong purples and tawny browns, are harmonised with the decaying wealth of forest and of orchard, I think the palm of beauty must be given in this land.

The sea is an unchangeable element of charm in all this landscape. Aci Castello should be visited, and those strange rocks, called the Ciclopidi, forced by volcanic pressure from beneath the waves. They are made of black basalt like the Giant's Causeway; and on their top can be traced the caps of calcareous stone they carried with them in the fret and fury of their upheaval from the sea-bed. Samphire, wild fennel, cactus, and acanthus clothe them now from crest to basement where the cliff is not too sheer. By the way, there are few plants more picturesque than the acanthus in full flower. Its pale lilac spikes of blossom stand waist-high above a wilderness of feathering, curving, delicately indented, burnished leaves—deep, glossy, cool, and green.

This is the place for a child's story of the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, who fed his flocks among the oak-woods of Etna, and who, strolling by the sea one summer evening, saw and loved the fair girl Galatea. She was

afraid of him, and could not bear his shaggy-browed round rolling eye. But he forgot his sheep and goats, and sat upon the cliffs and piped to her. Meanwhile she loved the beautiful boy Acis, who ran down from the copse to play with her upon the sea-beach. They hid together from Polyphemus in a fern-curtained cavern of the shore. But Polyphemus spied them out and heard them laughing together at their games. Then he grew wroth, and stamped with his huge feet upon the earth, and made it shake and quiver. He roared and bellowed in his rage, and tore up rocks and flung them at the cavern where the children were in hiding, and his eye shot fire beneath the grisly penthouse of his wrinkled brows. They, in their sore distress, prayed to heaven; and their prayers were heard: Galatea became a mermaid, so that she might swim and sport like foam upon the crests of the blue sea; and Acis was changed into a stream that leapt from the hills to play with her amid bright waters. But Polyphemus, in punishment for his rage, and spite, and jealousy, was forced to live in the mid-furnaces of Etna. There he growled and groaned and shot forth flame in impotent fury; for though he remembered the gladness of those playfellows, and sought to harm them by tossing red-hot rocks upon the shore, yet the light sea ever laughed, and the radiant river found its way down from the copsewood to the waves. The throes of Etna in convulsion are the pangs of his great giant's heart, pent up and sick with love for the bright sea and gladsome sun; for, as an old poet sings:—

> "There's love when holy heaven doth wound the earth;
> And love still prompts the land to yearn for bridals:
> The rain that falls in rivers from the sky,
> Impregnates earth: and she brings forth for men
> The flocks and herds and life of teeming Ceres."

To which let us add:—

> "But sometimes love is barren, when broad hills,
> Rent with the pangs of passion, yearn in vain,
> Pouring fire tears adown their furrowed cheeks,
> And heaving in the impotence of anguish."

There are few places in Europe where the poetic truth of Greek mythology is more apparent than here upon the coast between Etna and the sea. Of late, philosophers have been eager to tell us that the beautiful legends of the Greeks, which contain in the coloured haze of fancy all the thoughts afterwards expressed by that divine race in poetry and sculpture, are but decayed phrases, dead sentences, and words whereof the meaning was forgotten. In this theory there is a certain truth; for mythology stands midway between the first lispings of a nation in its language, and its full-developed utterances in art. Yet we have only to visit the scenes which gave birth to some Hellenic myth, and we perceive at once that, whatever philology may affirm, the legend was a living poem, a drama of life and passion transferred from human experience to the inanimate world by those early myth-makers, who were the first and the most fertile of all artists. Persephone was the patroness of Sicily, because amid the billowy corn-fields of her mother Demeter and the meadow flowers she loved in girlhood, are ever found sulphurous ravines and chasms breathing vapour from the pit of Hades. What were the Cyclops—that race of one-eyed giants—but the many minor cones of Etna? Observed from the sea by mariners, or vaguely spoken of by the natives, who had reason to dread their rage, these hillocks became lawless and devouring giants, each with one round burning eye. Afterwards the tales of Titans who had warred with Zeus were

realised in this spot. Typhœus or Enceladus made the mountain heave and snort; while Hephæstus not unnaturally forged thunderbolts in the central caverns of a volcano that never ceased to smoke. To the student of art and literature, mythology is chiefly interesting in its latest stages, when, the linguistic origin of special legends being utterly forgotten, the poets of the race played freely with its rich material. Who cares to be told that Achilles was the sun, when the child of Thetis and the lover of Patroclus has been sung for us by Homer? Are the human agonies of the doomed house of Thebes made less appalling by tracing back the tale of Œdipus to some prosaic source in old astronomy? The incest of Jocasta is the subject of supreme tragic art. It does not improve the matter, or whitewash the imagination of the Greeks, as some have fondly fancied, to unravel the fabric wrought by Homer and by Sophocles, into its raw material in Aryan dialects. Indeed this new method of criticism bids fair to destroy for young minds the human lessons of pathos and heroism in Greek poetry, and to create an obscure conviction that the greatest race of artists the world has ever produced were but dotards, helplessly dreaming over distorted forms of speech and obsolete phraseology.

Let us bid farewell to Etna from Taormina. All along the coast between Aci and Giardini the mountain towers distinct against a sunset sky—divested of its robe of cloud, translucent and blue as some dark sea-built crystal. The Val del Bove is shown to be a circular crater in which the lava has boiled and bubbled over to the fertile land beneath. As we reach Giardini, the young moon is shining, and the night is alive with stars so large and bright that they seem leaning down to whisper in the ears of our soul. The sea is calm,

touched here and there on the fringes of the bays and headlands with silvery light; and impendent crags loom black and sombre against the feeble azure of the moonlit sky. *Quale per incertam lunam et sub luce maligná:* such is our journey, with Etna, a grey ghost, behind our path, and the reflections of stars upon the sea, and glow-worms in the hedges, and the mystical still splendour of the night, that, like Death, liberates the soul, raising it above all common things, simplifying the outlines of the earth as well as our own thoughts to one twilight hush of aerial tranquillity. It is a strange compliment to such a landscape to say that it recalls a scene from an opera. Yet so it is. What the arts of the scene-painter and the musician strive to suggest, is here realised in fact; the mood of the soul created by music and by passion is natural here, spontaneous, prepared by the divine artists of earth, air, and sea.

Was there ever such another theatre as this of Taormina? Turned to the south, hollowed from the crest of a promontory 1000 feet above the sea, it faces Etna with its crown of snow: below, the coast sweeps onward to Catania and the distant headland of Syracuse. From the back the shore of Sicily curves with delicately indented bays toward Messina: then come the straits, and the blunt mass of the Calabrian mountains terminating Italy at Spartivento. Every spot on which the eye can rest is rife with reminiscences. It was there, we say, looking northward to the straits, that Ulysses tossed between Scylla and Charybdis; there, turning toward the flank of Etna, that he met with Polyphemus and defied the giant from his galley. From yonder snow-capped eyrie, *Αἴτνας σκοπία*, the rocks were hurled on Acis. And all along that shore, after Persephone was lost, went Demeter, torch in

hand, wailing for the daughter she could no more find among Sicilian villages. Then, leaving myths for history, we remember how the ships of Nikias set sail from Reggio, and coasted the forelands at our feet, past Naxos, on their way to Catania and Syracuse. Gylippus afterwards in his swift galley took the same course: and Dion, when he came to destroy his nephew's empire. Here too Timoleon landed, resolute in his firm will to purge the isle of tyrants.

What scenes, more spirit-shaking than any tragic shows—pageants of fire and smoke, and mountains in commotion—are witnessed from these grassy benches, when the earth rocks, and the sea is troubled, and the side of Etna flows with flame, and night grows horrible with bellowings that forebode changes in empires!—

> "Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agros
> Vidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Ætnam,
> Flammarumque globos liquefactaque volvere saxa."

The stage of these tremendous pomps is very calm and peaceful now. Lying among acanthus-leaves and asphodels, bound together by wreaths of white and pink convolvulus, we only feel that this is the loveliest landscape on which our eyes have ever rested or can rest. The whole scene is a symphony of blues—gemlike lapis lazuli in the sea, aerial azure in the distant headlands, light-irradiated sapphire in the sky, and impalpable vapour-mantled purple upon Etna. The grey tones of the neighbouring cliffs, and the glowing brickwork of the ruined theatre, through the arches of which shine sea and hillside, enhance by contrast these modulations of the one prevailing hue. Etna is the dominant feature of the landscape—*Αἴτνα μᾶτερ ἐμά*—*πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα*—than which no other

mountain is more sublimely solitary, more worthy of Pindar's praise, "The pillar of heaven, the nurse of sharp eternal snow." It is Etna that gives its unique character of elevated beauty to this coast scenery, raising it to a grander and more tragic level than the landscape of the Cornice and the Bay of Naples.

ATHENS.

ATHENS, by virtue of scenery and situation, was predestined to be the mother-land of the free reason of mankind, long before the Athenians had won by their great deeds the right to name their city the ornament and the eye of Hellas. Nothing is more obvious to one who has seen many lands and tried to distinguish their essential characters, than the fact that no one country exactly resembles another, but that, however similar in climate and locality, each presents a peculiar and well-marked property belonging to itself alone. The specific quality of Athenian landscape is light—not richness or sublimity or romantic loveliness or grandeur of mountain outline, but luminous beauty, serene exposure to the airs of heaven. The harmony and balance of the scenery, so varied in its details and yet so comprehensible, are sympathetic to the temperance of Greek morality, the moderation of Greek art. The radiance with which it is illuminated has all the clearness and distinction of the Attic intellect. From whatever point the plain of Athens with its semicircle of greater and lesser hills may be surveyed, it always presents a picture of dignified and lustrous beauty. The Acropolis is the centre of this landscape, splendid as a work of art with its crown of temples; and the sea, surmounted by the long low hills of the Morea, is the boundary to which the eye is irresistibly led. Mountains and islands and plain alike are

made of limestone, hardening here and there into marble, broken into delicate and varied forms, and sprinkled with a vegetation of low shrubs and brushwood so sparse and slight that the naked rock in every direction meets the light. This rock is grey and colourless: viewed in the twilight of a misty day, it shows the dull, tame uniformity of bone. Without the sun it is asleep and sorrowful. But by reason of this very deadness, the limestone of Athenian landscape is always ready to take the colours of the air and sun. In noonday it smiles with silvery lustre, fold upon fold of the indented hills and islands melting from the brightness of the sea into the untempered brilliance of the sky. At dawn and sunset the same rocks array themselves with a celestial robe of rainbow-woven hues: islands, sea, and mountains, far and near, burn with saffron, violet, and rose, with the tints of beryl and topaz, sapphire and almandine and amethyst, each in due order and at proper distances. The fabled dolphin in its death could not have showed a more brilliant succession of splendours waning into splendours through the whole chord of prismatic colours. This sensitiveness of the Attic limestone to every modification of the sky's light gives a peculiar spirituality to the landscape. The hills remain in form and outline unchanged; but the beauty breathed upon them lives or dies with the emotions of the air from whence it emanates: the spirit of light abides with them and quits them by alternations that seem to be the pulses of an ethereally communicated life. No country, therefore, could be better fitted for the home of a race gifted with exquisite sensibilities, in whom humanity should first attain the freedom of self-consciousness in art and thought. Ἀεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου βαίνοντες ἁβρῶς αἰθέρος—ever delicately moving through most translucent air—

said Euripides of the Athenians: and truly the bright air of Attica was made to be breathed by men in whom the light of culture should begin to shine. *Ἰοστέφανος* is an epithet of Aristophanes for his city; and if not crowned with other violets, Athens wears for her garland the air-empurpled hills—Hymettus, Lycabettus, Pentelicus, and Parnes.* Consequently, while still the Greeks of Homer's age were Achaians, while Argos was the titular seat of Hellenic empire, and the mythic deeds of the heroes were being enacted in Thebes or Mycenæ, Athens did but bide her time, waiting to manifest herself as the true god-child of Pallas, who sprang perfect from the brain of Zeus, Pallas, who is the light of cloudless heaven emerging after storms. And Pallas, when she planted her chosen people in Attica, knew well what she was doing. To the far-seeing eyes of the goddess, although the first-fruits of song and science and philosophy might be reaped upon the shores of the Ægean and the islands, yet the days were clearly descried when Athens should stretch forth her hand to hold the lamp of all her founder loved for Europe. As the priest of Egypt told Solon: "She chose the spot of earth in which you were born, because she saw that the happy temperament of the seasons in that land would produce the wisest of men. Wherefore the goddess who was a lover both of war and wisdom, selected and first of all settled that spot which was the most likely to produce men likest herself." This sentence from the "Timæus" of

* This interpretation of the epithet *ἰοστέφανος* is not, I think, merely fanciful. It seems to occur naturally to those who visit Athens with the language of Greek poets in their memory. I was glad to find, on reading a paper by the Dean of Westminster on the topography of Greece, that the same thought had struck him. Ovid, too, gives the adjective *purpureus* to Hymettus.

Plato* reveals the consciousness possessed by the Greeks of that intimate connection which subsists between a country and the temper of its race. To us the name Athenai—the fact that Athens by its title even in the prehistoric age was marked out as the appanage of her who was the patroness of culture—seems a fortunate accident, an undesigned coincidence of the most striking sort. To the Greeks, steeped in mythologic faith, accustomed to regard their lineage as autochthonous and their polity as the fabric of a god, nothing seemed more natural than that Pallas should have selected for her own exactly that portion of Hellas where the arts and sciences might flourish best. Let the Bœotians grow fat and stagnant upon their rich marsh-lands: let the Spartans form themselves into a race of soldiers in their mountain fortress: let Corinth reign, the queen of commerce, between her double seas: let the Arcadians in their oak woods worship pastoral Pan: let the plains of Elis be the meeting-place of Hellenes at their sacred games: let Delphi boast the seat of sooth oracular from Phœbus. Meanwhile the sunny but barren hills of Attica, open to the magic of the sky, and beautiful by reason of their nakedness, must be the home of a people powerful by might of intelligence rather than strength of limb, wealthy not so much by natural resources as by enterprise. Here, and here only, could stand the city sung by Milton:—

> "Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
> Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
> And eloquence, native to famous wits
> Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
> City or suburban, studious walks and shades."

We who believe in no authentic Pallas, child of Zeus,

* Jowett's translation, vol. ii. p. 520.

may yet pause awhile, when we contemplate Athens, to ponder whether those old mythologic systems, which ascribed to godhead the foundation of states and the patronage of peoples, had not some glimpse of truth beyond a mere blind guess. Is not, in fact, this Athenian land the promised and predestined home of a peculiar people, in the same sense as that in which Palestine was the heritage by faith of a tribe set apart by Jehovah for his own?

Unlike Rome, Athens leaves upon the memory one simple and ineffaceable impression. There is here no conflict between Paganism and Christianity, no statues of Hellas baptized by popes into the company of saints, no blending of the classical and mediæval and Renaissance influences in a bewilderment of vast antiquity. Rome, true to her historical vocation, embraces in her ruins all ages, all creeds, all nations. Her life has never stood still, but has submitted to many transformations, of which the traces are still visible. Athens, like the Greeks of history, is isolated in a sort of self-completion: she is a thing of the past, which still exists, because the spirit never dies, because beauty is a joy for ever. What is truly remarkable about the city is just this, that while the modern town is an insignificant mushroom of the present century, the monuments of Greek art in the best period—the masterpieces of Ictinus and Mnesicles, and the theatre on which the plays of the tragedians were produced—survive in comparative perfection, and are so far unencumbered with subsequent edifices that the actual Athens of Pericles absorbs our attention. There is nothing of any consequence intermediate between us and the fourth century B.C. Seen from a distance, the Acropolis presents nearly the same appearance as it offered to Spartan guardsmen when

they paced the ramparts of Deceleia. Nature around is all unaltered. Except that more villages, enclosed with olive-groves and vineyards, were sprinkled over those bare hills in classic days, no essential change in the landscape has taken place, no transformation, for example, of equal magnitude with that which converted the Campagna of Rome from a plain of cities to a poisonous solitude. All through the centuries which divide us from the age of Hadrian—centuries unfilled, as far as Athens is concerned, with memorable deeds or national activity—the Acropolis has stood uncovered to the sun. The tones of the marble of Pentelicus have daily grown more golden; decay has here and there invaded frieze and capital; war too has done its work, shattering the Parthenon in 1687 by the explosion of a powder-magazine, and the Propylæa in 1656 by a similar accident, and seaming the colonnades that still remain with cannon-balls in 1827. Yet in spite of time and violence the Acropolis survives, a miracle of beauty: like an everlasting flower, through all that lapse of years it has spread its coronal of marbles to the air, unheeded. And now, more than ever, its temples seem to be incorporate with the rock they crown. The slabs of column and basement have grown together by long pressure or molecular adhesion into a coherent whole. Nor have weeds or creeping ivy invaded the glittering fragments that strew the sacred hill. The sun's kiss alone has caused a change from white to amber-hued or russet. Meanwhile, the exquisite adaptation of Greek building to Greek landscape has been enhanced rather than impaired by that "unimaginable touch of time," which has broken the regularity of outline, softened the chisel-work of the sculptor, and confounded the painter's fretwork in one tint of glowing gold. The Parthenon,

the Erechtheum, and the Propylæa have become one with the hill on which they cluster, as needful to the scenery around them as the everlasting mountains, as sympathetic as the rest of nature to the successions of morning and evening, which waken them to passionate life by the magic touch of colour.

Thus there is no intrusive element in Athens to distract the mind from memories of its most glorious past. Walk into the theatre of Dionysus. The sculptures that support the stage—sileni bending beneath the weight of cornices, and lines of graceful youths and maidens—are still in their ancient station.* The pavement of the orchestra, once trodden by Athenian choruses, presents its tessellated marbles to our feet; and we may choose the seat of priest or archon or herald or thesmothetes, when we wish to summon before our mind's eye the pomp of the "Agamemnon" or the dances of the "Birds and Clouds." Each seat still bears some carven name—*ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΜΟΥΣΩΝ* or *ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΑΣΚΛΗΠΙΟΥ*—and that of the priest of Dionysus is beautifully wrought with Bacchic bas-reliefs. One of them, inscribed *ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΝΟΟΥ*, proves indeed that the extant chairs were placed here in the age of Hadrian, who completed the vast temple of Zeus Olympius, and filled its precincts with statues of his favourite slave, and named a new Athens after his own name. Yet we need not doubt that their position round the orchestra is traditional, and that even in their form they do not differ from those which the priests and officers of Athens used from the time of Æschylus downward. Probably

* It is true, however, that these sculptures belong to a comparatively late period, and that the theatre underwent some alterations in Roman days, so that the stage is now probably a few yards further from the seats than in the time of Sophocles.

a slave brought cushion and footstool to complete the comfort of these stately armchairs. Nothing else is wanted to render them fit now for their august occupants; and we may imagine the long-stoled greybearded men throned in state, each with his wand and with appropriate fillets on his head. As we rest here in the light of the full moon, which simplifies all outlines and heals with tender touch the wounds of ages, it is easy enough to dream ourselves into the belief that the ghosts of dead actors may once more glide across the stage. Fiery-hearted Medea, statuesque Antigone, Prometheus silent beneath the hammer-strokes of Force and Strength, Orestes hounded by his mother's Furies, Cassandra aghast before the palace of Mycenæ, pure-souled Hippolytus, ruthful Alcestis, the divine youth of Helen, and Clytemnestra in her queenliness, emerge like faint grey films against the bluish background of Hymettus. The night air seems vocal with echoes of old Greek, more felt than heard, like voices wafted to our sense in sleep, the sound whereof we do not seize, though the burden lingers in our memory.

In like manner, when moonlight, falling aslant upon the Propylæa, restores the marble masonry to its original whiteness, and the shattered heaps of ruined colonnades are veiled in shadow, and every form seems larger, grander, and more perfect than by day, it is well to sit upon the lowest steps, and looking upwards, to remember what processions passed along this way bearing the sacred peplus to Athene. The Panathenaic pomp, which Pheidias and his pupils carved upon the friezes of the Parthenon, took place once in five years, on one of the last days of July.* All the citizens joined in

* My purpose being merely picturesque, I have ignored the grave antiquarian difficulties which beset the interpretation of this frieze.

the honour paid to their patroness. Old men bearing olive-branches, young men clothed in bronze, chapleted youths singing the praise of Pallas in prosodial hymns, maidens carrying holy vessels, aliens bending beneath the weight of urns, servants of the temple leading oxen crowned with fillets, troops of horsemen reining in impetuous steeds: all these pass before us in the frieze of Pheidias. But to our imagination must be left what he has refrained from sculpturing, the chariot formed like a ship, in which the most illustrious nobles of Athens sat, splendidly arrayed, beneath the crocus-coloured curtain or peplus outspread upon a mast. Some concealed machinery caused this car to move; but whether it passed through the Propylæa, and entered the Acropolis, admits of doubt. It is, however, certain that the procession which ascended those steep slabs, and before whom the vast gates of the Propylæa swang open with the clangour of resounding bronze, included not only the citizens of Athens and their attendant aliens, but also troops of cavalry and chariots; for the mark of chariot-wheels can still be traced upon the rock. The ascent is so abrupt that this multitude moved but slowly. Splendid indeed, beyond any pomp of modern ceremonial, must have been the spectacle of the well-ordered procession, advancing through those giant colonnades to the sound of flutes and solemn chants—the shrill clear voices of boys in antiphonal chorus rising above the confused murmurs of such a crowd, the chafing of horses' hoofs upon the stone, and the lowing of bewildered oxen. To realise by fancy the many-coloured radiance of the temples, and the rich dresses of the votaries illuminated by that sharp light of a Greek sun, which defines outline and shadow and gives value to the faintest hue, would be impossible. All we can know for

positive about the chromatic decoration of the Greeks is, that whiteness artificially subdued to the tone of ivory prevailed throughout the stonework of the buildings, while blue and red and green in distinct, yet interwoven patterns, added richness to the fretwork and the sculpture of pediment and frieze. The sacramental robes of the worshippers accorded doubtless with this harmony, wherein colour was subordinate to light, and light was toned to softness.

Musing thus upon the staircase of the Propylæa, we may say with truth that all our modern art is but child's play to that of the Greeks. Very soul-subduing is the gloom of a cathedral like the Milanese Duomo, when the incense rises in blue clouds athwart the bands of sunlight falling from the dome, and the crying of choirs upborne upon the wings of organ music fills the whole vast space with a mystery of melody. Yet such ceremonial pomps as this are but as dreams and the shapes of visions, when compared with the clearly defined splendours of a Greek procession through marble peristyles in open air beneath the sun and sky. That spectacle combined the harmonies of perfect human forms in movement with the divine shapes of statues, the radiance of carefully selected vestments with hues inwrought upon pure marble. The rhythms and the melodies of the Doric mood were sympathetic to the proportions of the Doric colonnades. The grove of pillars through which the pageant passed grew from the living rock into shapes of beauty, fulfilling by the inbreathed spirit of man Nature's blind yearning after absolute completion The sun himself—not thwarted by artificial gloom, or tricked with alien colours of stained glass — was made to minister in all his strength to a pomp, the pride of which was the display of form in mani-

fold magnificence. The ritual of the Greeks was the ritual of a race at one with Nature, glorying in its affiliation to the mighty mother of all life, and striving to add by human art the coping-stone and final touch to her achievement. The ritual of the Catholic Church is the ritual of a race shut out from Nature, holding no communion with the powers of earth and air, but turning the spirit inwards and aiming at the concentration of the whole soul upon an unseen God. The temple of the Greeks was the house of a present deity; its cell his chamber; its statue his reality. The Christian cathedral is the fane where God who is a spirit is worshipped; no statue fills the choir from wall to wall and lifts its forehead to the roof; but the vacant aisles, with their convergent arches soaring upwards to the dome, are made to suggest the brooding of infinite and omnipresent Godhead. It was the object of the Greek artist to preserve a just proportion between the god's statue and his house, in order that the worshipper might approach him as a subject draws near to his monarch's throne. The Christian architect seeks to affect the emotions of the votary with a sense of vastness filled with unseen power. Our cathedrals are symbols of the universe where God is everywhere pavilioned and invisible. The Greek temple was a practical, utilitarian dwelling-house, made beautiful enough to suit divinity. The modern church is an idea expressed in stone, an aspiration of the spirit, shooting up from arch and pinnacle and spire into illimitable fields of air. It follows from these differences between the religious aims of Pagan and Christian architecture, that the former was far more favourable to the plastic arts. No beautiful or simple incident of human life was an inappropriate subject for the sculptor, in adorning the houses of gods who were themselves but human on a higher level;

and the ritual whereby the gods were honoured, was merely an exhibition, in its strength and joyfulness, of mortal beauty. Therefore the Panathenaic procession furnished Pheidias with a series of sculptural motives, which he had only to express according to the principles of his art. The frieze, three feet and four inches in height, raised forty feet above the pavement of the peristyle, ran for five hundred and twenty-four continuous feet round the outside wall of the cella of the Parthenon. The whole of this long line was wrought with carving of exquisite delicacy and supreme vigour, in such low relief as its peculiar position, far above the heads of the spectators, and only illuminated by light reflected from below, required. Every figure, every attitude, and every fold of drapery in its countless groups are a study; yet the whole was a transcript from actual contemporary Athenian life. Truly in matters of art we are but infants to the Greeks.

The topographical certainty which invests the ruins of the Acropolis with such peculiar interest, belongs in a less degree to the whole of Athens. Although the most recent researches have thrown fresh doubt upon the exact site of the Pnyx, and though no traces of the agora remain, yet we may be sure that the Bema from which Pericles sustained the courage of the Athenians during the Peloponnesian war, was placed upon the northern slope looking towards the Propylæa, while the wide irregular space between this hill, the Acropolis, the Areopagus, and the Theseum, must have formed the meeting-ground for amusement and discussion of the citizens at leisure. About the Areopagus, with its tribunal hollowed in the native rock, and the deep cleft beneath, where the shrine of the Eumenides was built, there is no question. The

extreme insignificance of this little mound may at first indeed excite incredulity and wonder; but a few hours in Athens accustom the traveller to a smallness of scale which at first sight seemed ridiculous. Colonus, for example, the Colonus which every student of Sophocles has pictured to himself in the solitude of unshorn meadows, where groves of cypresses and olives bent unpruned above wild tangles of narcissus-flowers and crocuses, and where the nightingale sang undisturbed by city noise or labour of the husbandman, turns out to be a scarcely appreciable mound, gently swelling from the cultivated land of the Cephissus. The Cephissus even in a rainy season may be crossed dryshod by an active jumper; and the Ilissus, where it flows beneath the walls of the Olympieion, is now dedicated to washerwomen instead of water-nymphs. Nature herself remains, on the whole, unaltered. Most notable are still the white poplars dedicated of old to Herakles, and the spreading planes which whisper to the limes in spring. In the midst of so arid and bare a landscape, these umbrageous trees are singularly grateful to the eye and to the sense oppressed with heat and splendour. Nightingales have not ceased to crowd the gardens in such numbers as to justify the tradition of their Attic origin, nor have the bees of Hymettus forgotten their labours: the honey of Athens can still boast a quality superior to that of Hybla or any other famous haunt of hives.

Tradition points out one spot which commands a beautiful distant view of Athens and the hills, as the garden of the Academy. The place is not unworthy of Plato and his companions. Very old olives grow in abundance, to remind us of those sacred trees beneath which the boys of Aristophanes ran races; and reeds with

which they might crown their foreheads, are thickly scattered through the grass. Abeles interlace their murmurous branches overhead, and the planes are as leafy as that which invited Socrates and Phædrus on the morning when they talked of love. In such a place we comprehend how philosophy went hand in hand at Athens with gymnastics, and why the poplar and the plane were dedicated to athletic gods. For the wrestling-grounds were built in groves like these, and their cool peristyles, the meeting-places of young men and boys, supplied the sages not only with an eager audience, but also with the leisure and the shade that learning loves. It was very characteristic of Greek life that speculative philosophy should not have chosen "to walk the studious cloister pale," but should rather have sought out places where "the busy hum of men" was loudest, and where youthful voices echoed. The Athenian transacted no business, and pursued but few pleasures, under a private roof. He conversed and bargained in the agora, debated on the open rocks of the Pnyx, and enjoyed discussion in the courts of the gymnasium. It is also far from difficult to understand beneath this over-vaulted and grateful gloom of bee-laden branches, what part love played in the haunts of runners and of wrestlers, why near the statue of Hermes stood that of Erôs, and wherefore Socrates surnamed his philosophy the Science of Love. *Φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἁνευ μαλακίας* is the boast of Pericles in his description of the Athenian spirit. *Φιλοσοφία μετὰ παιδεραστίας* is Plato's formula for the virtues of the most distinguished soul. These two mottoes, apparently so contradictory, found their point of meeting and their harmony in the gymnasium. The mere contemplation of these luxuriant groves, set in the luminous Attic landscape,

and within sight of Athens, explains a hundred passages of poets and philosophers. Turn to the opening scenes of the "Lysis" and the "Charmides." The action of the latter dialogue is laid in the palæstra of Taureas. Socrates has just returned from the camp at Potidæa, and after answering the questions of his friends, has begun to satisfy his own curiosity:*—

When there had been enough of this, I, in my turn, began to make inquiries about matters at home—about the present state of philosophy, and about the youth. I asked whether any of them were remarkable for beauty or sense—or both. Critias glancing at the door, invited my attention to some youths who were coming in, and talking noisily to one another, followed by a crowd. "Of the beauties, Socrates," he said, "I fancy that you will soon be able to form a judgment. For those who are just entering are the advanced guard of the great beauty of the day—and he is likely not to be far off himself."

"Who is he?" I said; "and who is his father?"

"Charmides," he replied, "is his name; he is my cousin, and the son of my uncle Glaucon: I rather think that you know him, although he was not grown up at the time of your departure."

"Certainly I know him," I said; "for he was remarkable even then when he was still a child, and now I should imagine that he must be almost a young man."

"You will see," he said, "in a moment what progress he has made, and what he is like." He had scarcely said the word, when Charmides entered.

Now you know, my friend, that I cannot measure anything, and of the beautiful, I am simply such a measure as a white line is of chalk; for almost all young persons are alike beautiful in my eyes. But at that moment, when I saw him coming in, I must admit that I was quite astonished at his beauty and stature; all the world seemed to be enamoured of him; amazement and confusion reigned when he entered; and a troop of lovers followed him. That grown-up men like ourselves should have been affected in this way was not surprising, but I observed that there was the same feeling among the boys; all of them, down to the very least child, turned and looked at him as if he had been a statue.

* I quote from Professor Jowett's unique translation.

Chaerephon called me and said: "What do you think of him, Socrates? Has he not a beautiful face?"

"That he has indeed," I said.

"But you would think nothing of his face," he replied, "if you could see his naked form: he is absolutely perfect."

This Charmides is a true Greek of the perfect type. Not only is he the most beautiful of Athenian youths; he is also temperate, modest, and subject to the laws of moral health. His very beauty is a harmony of well-developed faculties in which the mind and body are at one. How a young Greek managed to preserve this balance in the midst of the admiring crowds described by Socrates is a marvel. Modern conventions unfit our minds for realising the conditions under which he had to live. Yet it is indisputable that Plato has strained no point in the animated picture he presents of the palæstra. Aristophanes and Xenophon bear him out in all the details of the scene. We have to imagine a totally different system of social morality from ours, with virtues and vices, temptations and triumphs, unknown to our young men. The next scene from the "Lysis" introduces us to another wrestling-ground in the neighbourhood of Athens. Here Socrates meets with Hippothales, who is a devoted lover but a bad poet. Hippothales asks the philosopher's advice as to the best method of pleasing the boy Lysis:—

"Will you tell me by what words or actions I may become endeared to my love?"

"That is not easy to determine," I said; "but if you will bring your love to me, and will let me talk with him, I may perhaps be able to show you how to converse with him, instead of singing and reciting in the fashion of which you are accused."

"There will be no difficulty in bringing him," he replied; "if you will only go into the house with Ctesippus, and sit down and talk, he will come of himself; for he is fond of listening, Socrates. And as this is the festival of the Hermæa, there is no separation of young

men and boys but they are all mixed up together. He will be sure to come. But if he does not come, Ctesippus, with whom he is familiar, and whose relation Menexenus is, his great friend, shall call him."

"That will be the way," I said. Thereupon I and Ctesippus went towards the Palæstra, and the rest followed.

Upon entering we found that the boys had just been sacrificing; and this part of the festival was nearly come to an end. They were all in white array, and games at dice were going on among them. Most of them were in the outer court amusing themselves; but some were in a corner of the Apodyterium playing at odd-and-even with a number of dice, which they took out of little wicker baskets. There was also a circle of lookers-on, one of whom was Lysis. He was standing among the other boys and youths, having a crown upon his head, like a fair vision, and not less worthy of praise for his goodness than for his beauty. We left them, and went over to the opposite side of the room, where we found a quiet place, and sat down; and then we began to talk. This attracted Lysis, who was constantly turning round to look at us—he was evidently wanting to come to us. For a time he hesitated and had not the courage to come alone; but first of all, his friend Menexenus came in out of the court in the interval of his play, and when he saw Ctesippus and myself, came and sat by us; and then Lysis, seeing him, followed and sat down with him; and the other boys joined. I should observe that Hippothales, when he saw the crowd, got behind them, where he thought that he would be out of sight of Lysis, lest he should anger him; and there he stood and listened.

Enough has been quoted to show that beneath the porches of a Greek palæstra, among the youths of Athens, who wrote no exercises in dead languages, and thought chiefly of attaining to perfect manhood by the harmonious exercise of mind and body in temperate leisure, divine philosophy must indeed have been charming both to teachers and to learners:—

> "Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets
> Where no crude surfeit reigns."

There are no remains above ground of the buildings

which made the Attic gymnasia splendid. Nor are there in Athens itself many statues of the noble human beings who paced their porches and reclined beneath their shade. The galleries of Italy and the verses of the poets can alone help us to repeople the Academy with its mixed multitude of athletes and of sages. The language of Simætha, in Theocritus, brings the younger men before us: their cheeks are yellower than helichrysus with the down of youth, and their breasts shine brighter far than the moon, as though they had but lately left the "fair toils of the wrestling-ground." Upon some of the monumental tablets exposed in the burying-ground of Cerameicus and in the Theseum may be seen portraits of Athenian citizens. A young man holding a bird, with a boy beside him who carries a lamp or strigil; a youth, naked, and scraping himself after the games; a boy taking leave with clasped hands of his mother, while a dog leaps up to fawn upon his knee; a wine-party; a soul in Charon's boat; a husband parting from his wife: such are the simple subjects of these monuments; and under each is written *XPHΣTE XAIPE*—Friend, farewell! The tombs of the women are equally plain in character: a nurse brings a baby to its mother, or a slave helps her mistress at the toilette-table. There is nothing to suggest either the gloom of the grave or the hope of heaven in any of these sculptures. Their symbolism, if it at all exist, is of the least mysterious kind. Our attention is rather fixed upon the commonest affairs of life than on the secrets of death.

As we wander through the ruins of Athens, among temples which are all but perfect, and gardens which still keep their ancient greenery, we must perforce reflect how all true knowledge of Greek life has passed

away. To picture to ourselves its details, so as to become quite familiar with the way in which an Athenian thought and felt and occupied his time, is impossible. Such books as the "Charicles" of Becker or Wieland's "Agathon" only increase our sense of hopelessness, by showing that neither a scholar's learning nor a poet's fancy can pierce the mists of antiquity. We know that it was a strange and fascinating life, passed for the most part beneath the public eye, at leisure, without the society of free women, without what we call a home, in constant exercise of body and mind, in the duties of the law-courts and the assembly, in the toils of the camp and the perils of the sea, in the amusements of the wrestling-ground and the theatre, in sportful study and strenuous play. We also know that the citizens of Athens, bred up under the peculiar conditions of this artificial life, became impassioned lovers of their city;* that the greatest generals, statesmen, poets, orators, artists, historians, and philosophers that the world can boast, were produced in the short space of a century and a half by a city numbering about 20,000 burghers. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say with the author of "Hereditary Genius," that the population of Athens, taken as a whole, was as superior to us as we are to the Australian savages. Long and earnest, therefore, should be our hesitation before we condemn as pernicious or unprofitable the instincts and the customs of such a race.

The permanence of strongly marked features in the landscape of Greece, and the small scale of the whole country, add a vivid charm to the scenery of its great events. In the harbour of Peiræus we can scarcely fail

* Τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύναμιν καθ' ἡμέραν ἔργῳ θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς.—Thuc. ii. 43.

to picture to ourselves the pomp which went forth to Sicily that solemn morning, when the whole host prayed together and made libations at the signal of the herald's trumpet. The nation of athletes and artists and philosophers were embarked on what seemed to some a holiday excursion, and for others bid fair to realise unbounded dreams of ambition or avarice. Only a few were heavy-hearted; but the heaviest of all was the general who had vainly dissuaded his countrymen from the endeavour, and fruitlessly refused the command thrust upon him. That was "the morning of a mighty day, a day of crisis" for the destinies of Athens. Of all that multitude, how few would come again; of the empire which they made so manifest in its pride of men and arms, how little but a shadow would be left, when war and fever and the quarries of Syracuse had done their fore-appointed work! Yet no commotion of the elements, no eclipse or authentic oracle from heaven, was interposed between the arrogance of Athens and sure-coming Nemesis. The sun shone, and the waves laughed, smitten by the oars of galleys racing to Ægina. Meanwhile Zeus from the watchtower of the world held up the scales of fate, and the balance of Athens was wavering to its fall.

A few strokes of the oar carry us away from Peiræus to a scene fraught with far more thrilling memories. That little point of rock emergent from the water between Salamis and the mainland, bare, insignificant, and void of honour among islands to the natural eye, is Psyttaleia. A strange tightening at the heart assails us when we approach the centre-point of the most memorable battle-field of history. It was again "the morning of a mighty day, a day of crisis" for the destinies, not of Athens alone, but of humanity, when the Persian fleet, after rowing all night up and down

the channel between Salamis and the shore, beheld the face of Phœbus flash from behind Pentelicus and flood the Acropolis of Athens with fire. The Peiræus recalls a crisis in the world's drama whereof the great actors were unconscious: fair winds and sunny waves bore light hearts to Sicily. But Psyttaleia brings before us the heroism of a handful of men, who knew that the supreme hour of ruin or of victory for their nation and themselves had come. Terrible therefore was the energy with which they prayed and joined their pæan to the trumpet-blast of dawn that blazed upon them from the Attic hills. And this time Zeus, when he heard their cry, saw the scale of Hellas mount to the stars. Let Æschylus tell the tale; for he was there. A Persian is giving an account of the defeat at Salamis to Atossa:—

"The whole disaster, O my queen, began
With some fell fiend or devil,—I know not whence:
For thus it was; from the Athenian host
A man of Hellas came to thy son, Xerxes,
Saying that when black night shall fall in gloom,
The Hellenes would no longer stay but leap
Each on the benches of his bark, and save
Hither and thither by stolen flight their lives.
He, when he heard thereof, discerning not
The Hellene's craft, no, nor the spite of heaven,
To all his captains gives this edict forth;
When as the sun doth cease to light the world,
And darkness holds the precincts of the sky,
They should dispose the fleet in three close ranks,
To guard the outlets and the water-ways;
Others should compass Ajax' isle around:
Seeing that if the Hellenes 'scaped grim death
By finding for their ships some privy exit,
It was ordained that all should lose their heads.
So spake he, led by a mad mind astray,
Nor knew what should be by the will of heaven.

They, like well-ordered vassals, with assent
Straightway prepared their food, and every sailor
Fitted his oar-blade to the steady rowlock.
But when the sunlight waned and night apace
Descended, every man who swayed an oar
Went to the boats with him who wielded armour.
Then through the ship's length rank cheered rank in concert,
Sailing as each was set in order due:
And all night long the tyrants of the ships
Kept the whole navy cruising to and fro.
Night passed: yet never did the host of Hellenes
At any point attempt their stolen sally;
Until at length, when day with her white steeds
Forth shining, held the whole world under sway,
First from the Hellenes with a loud clear cry
Song-like, a shout made music, and therewith
The echo of the rocky isle rang back
Shrill triumph: but the vast barbarian host
Shorn of their hope trembled; for not for flight
The Hellenes hymned their solemn pæan then—
Nay, rather as for battle with stout heart.
Then too the trumpet speaking fired our foes,
And with a sudden rush of oars in time
They smote the deep sea at that clarion cry;
And in a moment you might see them all.
The right wing in due order well arrayed
First took the lead; then came the serried squadron
Swelling against us, and from many voices
One cry arose: Ho! sons of Hellenes, up!
Now free your fatherland, now free your sons,
Your wives, the fanes of your ancestral gods,
Your fathers' tombs! Now fight you for your all.
Yea, and from our side brake an answering hum
Of Persian voices. Then, no more delay,
Ship upon ship her beak of biting brass
Struck stoutly. 'Twas a bark, I ween, of Hellas
First charged, dashing from a Tyrrhenian galleon
Her prow-gear; then ran hull on hull pell-mell.
At first the torrent of the Persian navy
Bore up: but when the multitude of ships
Were straitly jammed, and none could help another,
Huddling with brazen-mouthèd beaks they clashed

And brake their serried banks of oars together;
Nor were the Hellenes slow or slack to muster
And pound them in a circle. Then ships' hulks
Floated keel upwards, and the sea was covered
With shipwreck multitudinous and with slaughter.
The shores and jutting reefs were full of corpses.
In indiscriminate rout, with straining oar,
The whole barbarian navy turned and fled.
Our foes, like men 'mid tunnies, draughts of fishes,
With splintered oars and spokes of shattered spars
Kept striking, grinding, smashing us: shrill shrieks
With groanings mingled held the hollow deep,
Till night's dark eye set limit to the slaughter.
But for our mass of miseries, could I speak
Straight on for ten days, I should never sum it:
For know this well, never in one day died
Of men so many multitudes before."

After a pause he resumes his narrative by describing Psyttaleia:—

"There lies an island before Salamis,
Small, with scant harbour, which dance-loving Pan
Is wont to tread, haunting the salt sea-beaches.
There Xerxes placed his chiefs, that when the foes
Chased from their ships should seek the sheltering isle,
They might with ease destroy the host of Hellas,
Saving their own friends from the briny straits.
Ill had he learned what was to hap; for when
God gave the glory to the Greeks at sea,
That same day, having fenced their flesh with brass,
They leaped from out their ships; and in a circle
Enclosed the whole girth of the isle, that so
None knew where he should turn; but many fell
Crushed with sharp stones in conflict, and swift arrows
Flew from the quivering bowstrings winged with murder.
At last in one fierce onset with one shout
They strike, hack, hew the wretches' limbs asunder,
Till every man alive had fallen beneath them.
Then Xerxes groaned, seeing the gulf unclose
Of grief below him; for his throne was raised
High in the sight of all by the sea-shore.

Rending his robes, and shrieking a shrill shriek,
He hurriedly gave orders to his host;
Then headlong rushed in rout and heedless ruin."

Atossa makes appropriate exclamations of despair and horror. Then the messenger proceeds :—

"The captains of the ships that were not shattered,
Set speedy sail in flight as the winds blew.
The remnant of the host died miserably,
Some in Bœotia round the glimmering springs
Tired out with thirst; some of us scant of breath
Escaped with bare life to the Phocian bounds,
And land of Doris, and the Melian Gulf,
Where with kind draughts Spercheius soaks the soil.
Thence in our flight Achaia's ancient plain
And Thessaly's stronghold received us worn
For want of food. Most died in that fell place
Of thirst and famine; for both deaths were there.
Yet to Magnesia came we and the coast
Of Macedonia, to the ford of Axius,
And Bolbé's canebrakes and the Pangæan range,
Edonian borders. Then in that grim night
God sent unseasonable frost, and froze
The stream of holy Strymon. He who erst
Recked nought of gods, now prayed with supplication,
Bowing before the powers of earth and sky.
But when the host from lengthy orisons
Surceased, it crossed the ice-incrusted ford.
And he among us who set forth before
The sun-god's rays were scattered, now was saved.
For blazing with sharp beams the sun's bright circle
Pierced the mid-stream, dissolving it with fire.
There were they huddled. Happy then was he
Who soonest cut the breath of life asunder.
Such as survived and had the luck of living,
Crossed Thrace with pain and peril manifold,
'Scaping mischance, a miserable remnant,
Into the dear land of their homes. Wherefore
Persia may wail, wanting in vain her darlings.
This is the truth. Much I omit to tell
Of woes by God wrought on the Persian race."

Upon this triumphal note it were well, perhaps, to pause. Yet since the sojourner in Athens must needs depart by sea, let us advance a little way further beyond Salamis. The low shore of the isthmus soon appears; and there is the hill of Corinth and the site of the city, as desolate now as when Antipater of Sidon made the sea-waves utter a threnos over her ruins. "The deathless Nereids, daughters of Oceanus," still lament by the shore, and the Isthmian pines are as green as when their boughs were plucked to bind a victor's forehead. Feathering the grey rock now as then, they bear witness to the wisdom and the moderation of the Greeks, who gave to the conquerors in sacred games no wreath of gold, or title of nobility, or land, or jewels, but the honour of an illustrious name, the guerdon of a mighty deed, and branches taken from the wild pine of Corinth, or the olive of Olympia, or the bay that flourished like a weed at Delphi. What was indigenous and characteristic of his native soil, not rare and costly things from foreign lands, was precious to the Greek. This piety, after the lapse of centuries and the passing away of mighty cities, still bears fruit. Oblivion cannot wholly efface the memory of those great games while the fir-trees rustle to the sea-wind as of old. Down the gulf we pass, between mountain range and mountain. On one hand, two-peaked Parnassus rears his cope of snow aloft over Delphi; on the other, Erymanthus and Hermes' home, Cyllene, bar the pastoral glades of Arcady. Greece is the land of mountains, not of rivers or of plains. The titles of the hills of Hellas smite our ears with echoes of ancient music — Olympus and Cithæron, Taygetus, Othrys, Helicon, and Ida. The headlands of the mainland are mountains, and the islands are mountain summits of a submerged continent. Austerely beautiful, not wild with an Italian luxuriance, nor mournful with Sicilian mono-

tony of outline, nor yet again overwhelming with the sublimity of Alps, they seem the proper home of a race which sought its ideal of beauty in distinction of shape and not in multiplicity of detail, in light and not in richness of colouring, in form and not in size.

At length the open sea is reached. Past Zante and Cephalonia we glide "under a roof of blue Ionian weather;" or, if the sky has been troubled with storm, we watch the moulding of long glittering cloud-lines, processions and pomps of silvery vapour, fretwork and frieze of alabaster piled above the islands, pearled promontories and domes of rounded snow. Soon Santa Maura comes in sight :—

> "Leucatæ nimbosa cacumina montis,
> Et formidatus nautis aperitur Apollo."

Here Sappho leapt into the waves to cure love-longing, according to the ancient story; and he who sees the white cliffs chafed with breakers and burning with fierce light, as it was once my luck to see them, may well with Childe Harold "feel or deem he feels no common glow." All through the afternoon it had been raining, and the sea was running high beneath a petulant west wind. But just before evening, while yet there remained a hand's breadth between the sea and the sinking sun, the clouds were rent and blown in masses about the sky. Rain still fell fretfully in scuds and fleeces; but where for hours there had been nothing but a monotone of greyness, suddenly fire broke and radiance and storm-clouds in commotion. Then, as if built up by music, a rainbow rose and grew above Leucadia, planting one foot on Actium and the other on Ithaca, and spanning with a horseshoe arch that touched the zenith, the long line of roseate cliffs. The clouds upon which this bow was

woven, were steel-blue beneath and crimson above; and the bow itself was bathed in fire—its violets and greens and yellows visibly ignited by the liquid flame on which it rested. The sea beneath, stormily dancing, flashed back from all its crests the same red glow, shining like a ridged lava-torrent in its first combustion. Then as the sun sank, the crags burned deeper with scarlet blushes as of blood, and with passionate bloom as of pomegranate or oleander flowers. Could Turner rise from the grave to paint a picture that should bear the name of "Sappho's Leap," he would paint it thus: and the world would complain that he had dreamed the poetry of his picture. But who could *dream* anything so wild and yet so definite? Only the passion of orchestras, the fire-flight of the last movement of the C minor symphony, can in the realms of art give utterance to the spirit of scenes like this.

RIMINI.

SIGISMONDO PANDOLFO MALATESTA AND LEO BATTISTA ALBERTI.

RIMINI is a city of about 18,000 souls, famous for its Stabilmento de' Bagni and its antiquities, seated upon the coast of the Adriatic, a little to the south-east of the world-historical Rubicon. It is our duty to mention the baths first among its claims to distinction, since the prosperity and cheerfulness of the little town depend on them in a great measure. But visitors from the north will fly from these, to marvel at the bridge which Augustus built and Tiberius completed, and which still spans the Marecchia with five gigantic arches of white Istrian limestone, as solidly as if it had not borne the tramplings of at least three conquests. The triumphal arch, too, erected in honour of Augustus, is a notable monument of Roman architecture. Broad, ponderous, substantial, tufted here and there with flowering weeds, and surmounted with mediæval machicolations, proving it to have sometimes stood for city gate or fortress; it contrasts most favourably with the slight and somewhat gimcrack arch of Trajan in the sister city of Ancona. Yet these remains of the imperial pontifices, mighty and interesting as they are, sink into insignificance beside the one great wonder of Rimini, the cathedral built for

Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta by Leo Battista Alberti in 1450. This strange church, one of the earliest extant buildings in which the Neopaganism of the Renaissance showed itself in full force, brings together before our memory two men who might be chosen as typical in their contrasted characters of the transitional age which gave them birth.

No one with any tincture of literary knowledge is ignorant of the fame at least of the great Malatesta family—the house of the Wrongheads, as they were rightly called by some prevision of their future part in Lombard history. The readers of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth cantos of the "Inferno" have all heard of

> "E il mastin vecchio e il nuovo da Verucchio
> Che fecer di Montagna il mal governo,"

while the story of Francesca da Polenta, who was wedded to the hunchback Giovanni Malatesta and murdered by him with her lover Paolo, is known not merely to students of Dante, but to readers of Byron and Leigh Hunt, to admirers of Flaxman, Ary Scheffer, Doré—to all, in fact, who have of art and letters any love.

The history of these Malatesti, from their first establishment under Otho III. as lieutenants for the Empire in the Marches of Ancona, down to their final subjugation by the Papacy in the age of the Renaissance, is made up of all the vicissitudes which could befall a mediæval Italian despotism. Acquiring an unlawful right over the towns of Rimini, Cesena, Sogliano, Ghiacciuolo, they ruled their petty principalities like tyrants by the help of the Guelf and Ghibelline factions, inclining to the one or the other as it suited their humour or their interest, wrangling among

themselves, transmitting the succession of their dynasty through bastards and by deeds of force, quarrelling with their neighbours the Counts of Urbino, alternately defying and submitting to the Papal legates in Romagna, serving as condottieri in the wars of the Visconti and the state of Venice, and by their restlessness and genius for military intrigues contributing in nó slight measure to the general disturbance of Italy. The Malatesti were a race of strongly marked character: more, perhaps, than any other house of Italian tyrants, they combined for generations those qualities of the fox and the lion, which Machiavelli thought indispensable to a successful despot. Son after son, brother with brother, they continued to be fierce and valiant soldiers, cruel in peace, hardy in war, but treasonable and suspicious in all transactions that could not be settled by the sword. Want of union, with them as with the Baglioni and many other of the minor noble families in Italy, prevented their founding a substantial dynasty. Their power, based on force, was maintained by craft and crime, and transmitted through tortuous channels by intrigue. While false in their dealings with the world at large, they were diabolical in the perfidy with which they treated one another. No feudal custom, no standard of hereditary right, ruled the succession in their family. Therefore the ablest Malatesta for the moment clutched what he could of the domains that owned his house for masters. Partitions among sons or brothers, mutually hostile and suspicious, weakened the whole stock. Yet they were great enough to hold their own for centuries among the many tyrants who infested Lombardy. That the other princely families of Romagna, Emilia, and the March were in the same state of internal discord and dismemberment, was pro-

bably one reason why the Malatesti stood their ground so firmly as they did.

As far as Rimini is concerned, the house of Malatesta culminated in Sigismondo Pandolfo, son of Gian Galeazzo Visconti's general, the perfidious Pandolfo. It was he who built the Rocca, or castle of the despots, which stands a little way outside the town, commanding a fair view of Apennine tossed hill-tops and broad Lombard plain, and who remodelled the Cathedral of Saint Francis on a plan suggested by the greatest genius of the age. Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta was one of the strangest products of the earlier Renaissance. To enumerate the crimes which he committed within the sphere of his own family, mysterious and inhuman outrages which render the tale of the Cenci credible, would violate the decencies of literature. A thoroughly bestial nature gains thus much with posterity that its worst qualities must be passed by in silence. It is enough to mention that he murdered three wives in succession,* Bussoni di Carmagnuola, Guinipera d'Este, and Polissena Sforza, on various pretexts of infidelity, and carved horns upon his own tomb with this fantastic legend underneath:—

> "Porto le corna ch' ognuno le vede,
> E tal le porta che non se lo crede."

He died in wedlock with the beautiful and learned Isotta degli Atti, who had for some time been his

* His first wife was a daughter of the great general of the Venetians against Francesco Sforza. Whether Sigismondo murdered her, as Sansovino seems to imply in his "Famiglie Illustri," or whether he only repudiated her after her father's execution on the Piazza di San Marco, admits of doubt. About the question of Sigismondo's marriage with Isotta there is also some uncertainty. At any rate she had been some time his mistress before she became his wife.

mistress. But like most of the Malatesti, he left no legitimate offspring. Throughout his life he was distinguished for bravery and cunning, for endurance of fatigue and rapidity of action, for an almost fretful rashness in the execution of his schemes, and for a character terrible in its violence. He was acknowledged as a great general; yet nothing succeeded with him. The long warfare which he carried on against the Duke of Montefeltro ended in his discomfiture. Having begun by defying the Holy See, he was impeached at Rome for heresy, parricide, incest, adultery, rape, and sacrilege, burned in effigy by Pope Pius II., and finally restored to the bosom of the Church, after suffering the despoliation of almost all his territories, in 1463. The occasion on which this fierce and turbulent despiser of laws human and divine was forced to kneel as a penitent before the Papal legate in the gorgeous temple dedicated to his own pride, in order that the ban of excommunication might be removed from Rimini, was one of those petty triumphs, interesting chiefly for their picturesqueness, by which the Popes confirmed their questionable rights over the cities of Romagna. Sigismondo, shorn of his sovereignty, took the command of the Venetian troops against the Turks in the Morea, and returned in 1465, crowned with laurels, to die at Rimini in the scene of his old splendour.

A very characteristic incident belongs to this last act of his life. Dissolute, treacherous, and inhuman as he was, the tyrant of Rimini had always encouraged literature, and delighted in the society of artists. He who could brook no contradiction from a prince or soldier, allowed the pedantic scholars of the sixteenth century to dictate to him in matters of taste, and sat with exemplary humility at the feet of Latinists

like Porcellio, Basinio, and Trebanio. Valturio, the engineer, and Alberti, the architect, were his familiar friends; and the best hours of his life were spent in conversation with these men. Now that he found himself upon the sacred soil of Greece, he was determined not to return to Italy empty-handed. Should he bring manuscripts or marbles, precious vases or inscriptions in half-legible Greek character? These relics were greedily sought for by the potentates of Italian cities; and no doubt Sigismondo enriched his library with some such treasures. But he obtained a nobler prize—nothing less than the body of a saint of scholarship, the authentic bones of the great Platonist, Gemisthus Pletho. These he exhumed from their Greek grave and caused them to be deposited in a stone sarcophagus outside the cathedral of his building in Rimini. The Venetians, when they stole the body of St Mark from Alexandria, were scarcely more pleased than was Sigismondo with the acquisition of this Father of the Neopagan faith. Upon the tomb we still may read this legend: "Jemisthii Bizantii philosophor sua temp principis reliquum Sig. Pan. Mal. Pan. F. belli Pelop adversus Turcor regem Imp ob ingentem eruditorum quo flagrat amorem huc afferendum introque mittendum curavit MCCCCLXVI." Of the Latinity of the inscription much cannot be said; but it means that "Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, having served as general against the Turks in the Morea, induced by the great love with which he burns for all learned men, brought and placed here the remains of Gemisthus of Byzantium, the prince of the philosophers of his day."

Sigismondo's portrait, engraved on medals, and sculptured upon every frieze and point of vantage in the Cathedral of Rimini, well denotes the man. His face

is seen in profile. The head, which is low and flat above the forehead, rising swiftly backward from the crown, carries a thick bushy shock of hair curling at the ends, such as the Italians call a *zazzera.* The eye is deeply sunk, with long venomous flat eyelids, like those which Leonardo gives to his most wicked faces. The nose is long and crooked, curving like a vulture's over a petulant mouth, with lips deliberately pressed together, as though it were necessary to control some nervous twitching. The cheek is broad, and its bone is strongly marked. Looking at these features in repose, we cannot but picture to our fancy what expression they might assume under a sudden fit of fury, when the sinews of the face were contracted with quivering spasms, and the lips writhed in sympathy with knit forehead and wrinkled eyelids.

Allusion has been made to the Cathedral of St Francis at Rimini, as the great ornament of the town, and the chief monument of Sigismondo's fame. It is here that all the Malatesti lie. Here too is the chapel consecrated to Isotta, "Divæ Isottæ Sacrum;" and the tombs of the Malatesta ladies, "Malatestorum domûs heroidum sepulchrum;" and Sigismondo's own grave with the cuckold's horns and scornful epitaph. Nothing but the fact that the church is duly dedicated to St Francis, and that its outer shell of classic marble encases an old Gothic edifice, remains to remind us that it is a Christian place of worship.* It has no sanctity, no spirit of piety. The pride of the tyrant whose legend—

* The account of this church given by Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pii Secundi, Comment., ii. 92) deserves quotation: "Ædificavit tamen nobile templum Arimini in honorem divi Francisci, verum ita gentilibus operibus implevit, ut non tam Christianorum quam infidelium dæmones adorantium templum esse videatur."

"Sigismundus Pandulphus Malatesta Pan. F. Fecit Anno Gratiæ MCCCL"—occupies every arch and string-course of the architecture, and whose coat-of-arms and portrait in medallion, with his cipher and his emblems of an elephant and a rose, are wrought in every piece of sculptured work throughout the building, seems so to fill this house of prayer that there is no room left for God. Yet the Cathedral of Rimini remains a monument of first-rate importance for all students who seek to penetrate the revived Paganism of the fifteenth century. It serves also to bring a far more interesting Italian of that period than the tyrant of Rimini himself, before our notice. In the execution of his design, Sigismondo received the assistance of one of the most remarkable men of this or any other age. Leo Battista Alberti, a scion of the noble Florentine house of that name, born during the exile of his parents, and educated in the Venetian territory, was endowed by nature with aptitudes, faculties, and sensibilities so varied, as to deserve the name of universal genius. Italy in the Renaissance period was rich in natures of this sort, to whom nothing that is strange or beautiful seemed unfamiliar, and who, gifted with a kind of divination, penetrated the secrets of the world by sympathy. To Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michel Agnolo Buonarotti may be added Leo Battista Alberti. That he achieved less than his great compeers, and that he now exists as the shadow of a mighty name, was the effect of circumstances. He came half a century too early into the world, and worked as a pioneer rather than a settler of the realm which Leonardo ruled as his demesne. Very early in his boyhood Alberti showed the versatility of his talents. The use of arms, the management of horses, music, painting, modelling for sculpture,

mathematics, classical and modern literature, physical science as then comprehended, and all the bodily exercises proper to the estate of a young nobleman, were at his command. His biographer asserts that he was never idle, never subject to ennui or fatigue. He used to say that books at times gave him the same pleasure as brilliant jewels or perfumed flowers: hunger and sleep could not keep him from them then. At other times the letters on the page appeared to him like twining and contorted scorpions, so that he preferred to gaze on anything but written scrolls. He would then turn to music or painting, or to the physical sports in which he excelled. The language in which this alternation of passion and disgust for study is expressed, bears on it the stamp of Alberti's peculiar temperament, his fervid and imaginative genius, instinct with subtle sympathies and strange repugnances. Flying from his study, he would then betake himself to the open air. No one surpassed him in running, in wrestling, in the force with which he cast his javelin or discharged his arrows. So sure was his aim and so skilful his cast, that he could fling a farthing from the pavement of the square, and make it ring against a church roof far above. When he chose to jump, he put his feet together and bounded over the shoulders of men standing erect upon the ground. On horseback he maintained perfect equilibrium, and seemed incapable of fatigue. The most restive and vicious animals trembled under him and became like lambs. There was a kind of magnetism in the man. We read, besides these feats of strength and skill, that he took pleasure in climbing mountains, for no other purpose apparently than for the joy of being close to nature. In this, as in many other of his instincts, Alberti was before his age. To care for the beauties of

landscape unadorned by art, and to sympathise with sublime or rugged scenery, was not in the spirit of the Renaissance. Humanity occupied the attention of poets and painters; and the age was yet far distant when the pantheistic feeling for the world should produce the art of Wordsworth and of Turner. Yet a few great natures even then began to comprehend the charm and mystery which the Greeks had imaged in their Pan, the sense of an all-pervasive spirit in wild places, the feeling of a hidden want, the invisible tie which makes man a part of rocks and woods and streams around him. Petrarch had already ascended the summit of Mont Pelvoux, to meditate, with an exaltation of the soul he scarcely understood, upon the scene spread at his feet and above his head. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini delighted in wild places for no mere pleasure of the chase, but for the joy he took in communing with nature. How St Francis found God in the sun and the air, the water and the stars, we know by his celebrated hymn: and of Dante's acute observation, every canto of the "Divine Comedy" is witness. Leo Alberti was touched in spirit by a deeper and a stranger pathos than any of these men: "In the early spring, when he beheld the meadows and hills covered with flowers, and saw the trees and plants of all kinds bearing promise of fruit, his heart became exceeding sorrowful: and when in autumn he looked on fields heavy with harvest and orchards apple-laden, he felt such grief that many even saw him weep for the sadness of his soul." It would seem that he scarcely understood the source of this sweet trouble: for at such times he compared the sloth and inutility of men with the industry and fertility of nature; as though this were the secret of his melancholy. A poet of our century has

noted the same stirring of the spirit, and has striven to account for it:—

> "Tears from the depth of some divine despair
> Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,
> In looking on the happy autumn fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more."

Both Alberti and Tennyson have connected the *mal du pays* of the human soul for that ancient country of its birth, the mild Saturnian earth from which we sprang, with a sense of loss. It is the waste of human energy that affects Alberti; the waste of human life touches the modern poet. Yet both perhaps have scarcely interpreted their own spirit; for is not the true source of tears deeper and more secret? Man is a child of nature in the simplest sense; and the stirrings of the secular breasts that gave him suck, and on which he even now must hang, have potent influences over his emotions. Of Alberti's extraordinary sensitiveness to all such impressions many curious tales are told. The sight of refulgent jewels, of flowers, and of fair landscapes, had the same effect upon his nerves as the sound of the Dorian mood upon the youths whom Pythagoras cured of passion by music. He found in them an anodyne for pain, a restoration from sickness. Like Walt Whitman, who adheres to nature by closer and more vital sympathy than any other poet of the modern world, Alberti felt the charm of excellent old age no less than that of florid youth. "On old men gifted with a noble presence, and hale and vigorous, he gazed again and again, and said that he revered in them the delights of nature (naturæ delitias)." Beasts and birds and all living creatures moved him to admiration for the grace with which they had been gifted, each in his own kind.

It is even said that he composed a funeral oration for a dog which he had loved and which died.

To this sensibility for all fair things in nature, Alberti added the charm of a singularly sweet temper and graceful conversation. The activity of his mind, which was always being exercised on subjects of grave speculation, removed him from the noise and bustle of commonplace society. He was somewhat silent, inclined to solitude, and of a pensive countenance; yet no man found him difficult of access: his courtesy was exquisite, and among familiar friends he was noted for the flashes of a delicate and subtle wit. Collections were made of his apophthegms by friends, and some are recorded by his anonymous biographer.* Their finer perfume, as almost always happens with good sayings which do not contain the full pith of a proverb, but owe their force, in part at least, to the personality of their author, and to the happy moment of their production, has evanesced. Here, however, is one which seems still to bear the impress of Alberti's genius: "Gold is the soul of labour, and labour the slave of pleasure." Of women he used to say that their inconstancy was an antidote to their falseness; for if a woman could but persevere in what she undertook, all the fair works of men would be ruined. One of his strongest moral sentences is aimed at envy, from which he suffered much in his own life, and against which he guarded with a curious amount of caution. His own family grudged the distinction which his talents gained for him, and a dark story is told of a secret attempt made by them to assassinate him through his servants. Alberti met these ignoble jealousies with a stately calm and a sweet

* Almost all the facts of Alberti's life are to be found in the Latin biography included in Muratori.

dignity of demeanour, never condescending to accuse his relatives, never seeking to retaliate, but acting always for the honour of his illustrious house. In the same spirit of generosity he refused to enter into wordy warfare with detractors and calumniators, sparing the reputation even of his worst enemy when chance had placed him in his power. This moderation both of speech and conduct was especially distinguished in an age which tolerated the fierce invectives of Filelfo, and applauded the vindictive courage of Cellini. To money Alberti showed a calm indifference. He committed his property to his friends and shared with them in common. Nor was he less careless about vulgar fame, spending far more pains in the invention of machinery and the discovery of laws, than in their publication to the world. His service was to knowledge, not to glory. Self-control was another of his eminent qualities. With the natural impetuosity of a large heart, and the vivacity of a trained athlete, he yet never allowed himself to be subdued by anger or by sensual impulses, but took pains to preserve his character unstained and dignified before the eyes of men. A story is told of him which may remind us of Goethe's determination to overcome his giddiness. In his youth his head was singularly sensitive to changes of temperature; but by gradual habituation he brought himself at last to endure the extremes of heat and cold bareheaded. In like manner he had a constitutional disgust for onions and honey; so powerful, that the very sight of these things made him sick. Yet by constantly viewing and touching what was disagreeable, he conquered these dislikes; and proved that men have a complete mastery over what is merely instinctive in their nature. His courage corresponded to his splendid physical development. When a boy of fifteen, he

severely wounded himself in the foot. The gash had to be probed and then sewn up. Alberti not only bore the pain of this operation without a groan, but helped the surgeon with his own hands; and effected a cure of the fever which succeeded, by the solace of singing to his cithern. For music he had a genius of the rarest order; and in painting he is said to have achieved success. Nothing, however, remains of his work; and from what Vasari says of it, we may fairly conclude that he gave less care to the execution of finished pictures, than to drawings subsidiary to architectural and mechanical designs. His biographer relates that when he had completed a painting, he called children and asked them what it meant. If they did not know, he reckoned it a failure. He was also in the habit of painting from memory. While at Venice, he put on canvas the faces of friends at Florence whom he had not seen for months. That the art of painting was subservient in his estimation to mechanics, is indicated by what we hear about the camera, in which he showed landscapes by day and the revolutions of the stars by night, so lively drawn that the spectators were affected with amazement. The semi-scientific impulse to extend man's mastery over nature, the magician's desire to penetrate secrets, which so powerfully influenced the development of Leonardo's genius, seems to have overcome the purely æsthetic instincts of Alberti, so that he became in the end neither a great artist like Raphael, nor a great discoverer like Galileo, but rather a clairvoyant to whom the miracles of nature and of art lie open.

After the first period of youth was over, Leo Battista Alberti devoted his great faculties and all his wealth of genius to the study of the law—then, as now, the quicksand of the noblest natures. The industry with which

he applied himself to the civil and ecclesiastical codes broke his health. For recreation he composed a Latin comedy called "Philodoxeos," which imposed upon the judgment of scholars, and was ascribed as a genuine antique to Lepidus, the comic poet. Feeling stronger, Alberti returned at the age of twenty to his law studies, and pursued them in the teeth of disadvantages. His health was still uncertain, and the fortune of an exile reduced him to the utmost want. It was no wonder that under these untoward circumstances even his Herculean strength gave way. Emaciated and exhausted, he lost the clearness of his eyesight, and became subject to arterial disturbances, which filled his ears with painful sounds. This nervous illness is not dissimilar to that which Rousseau describes in the confessions of his youth. In vain, however, his physicians warned Alberti of impending peril. A man of so much stanchness, accustomed to control his nature with an iron will, is not ready to accept advice. Alberti persevered in his studies, until at last the very seat of intellect was invaded. His memory began to fail him for names, while he still retained with wonderful accuracy whatever he had seen with his eyes. It was now impossible to think of law as a profession. Yet since he could not live without severe mental exercise, he had recourse to studies which tax the verbal memory less than the intuitive faculties of the reason. Physics and mathematics became his chief resource; and he devoted his energies to literature. His "Treatise on the Family" may be numbered among the best of those compositions on social and speculative subjects, in which the Italians of the Renaissance sought to rival Cicero. His essays on the arts are mentioned by Vasari with sincere approbation. Comedies, interludes, orations, dialogues, and poems flowed with abundance

from his facile pen. Some were written in Latin, which he commanded more than fairly; some in the Tuscan tongue, of which, owing to the long exile of his family in Lombardy, he is said to have been less a master. It was owing to this youthful illness, from which apparently his constitution never wholly recovered, that Alberti's genius was directed to architecture.

Through his friendship with Flavio Biondo, the famous Roman antiquary, Alberti received an introduction to Nicholas V. at the time when this, the first great Pope of the Renaissance, was engaged in rebuilding the palaces and fortifications of Rome. Nicholas discerned the genius of the man, and employed him as his chief counsellor in all matters of architecture. When the Pope died, he was able, while reciting his long Latin will upon his deathbed, to boast that he had restored the Holy See to its due dignity, and the Eternal City to the splendour worthy of the seat of Christendom. The accomplishment of the second part of his work he owed to the genius of Alberti. After doing thus much for Rome under Thomas of Sarzana, and before beginning to beautify Florence at the instance of the Rucellai family, Alberti entered the service of the Malatesta, and undertook to remodel the Cathedral of St Francis at Rimini. He found it a plain Gothic structure with apse and side chapels. Such churches are common enough in Italy, where pointed architecture never developed its true character of complexity and richness, but was doomed to the vast vacuity exemplified in San Petronio of Bologna. He left it a strange medley of mediæval and Renaissance work, a symbol of that dissolving scene in the world's pantomime, when the spirit of classic art, as yet but little comprehended, was encroaching on the early Christian taste. Perhaps the mixture of styles so

startling in San Francesco ought not to be laid to the charge of Alberti, who had to execute the task of turning a Gothic into a classic building. All that he could do was to alter the whole exterior of the church, by affixing a screen-work of Roman arches and Corinthian pilasters, so as to hide the old design and yet to leave the main features of the fabric, the windows and doors especially, *in statu quo.* With the interior he dealt upon the same general principle, by not disturbing its structure, while he covered every available square inch of surface with decorations alien to the Gothic manner. Externally, San Francesco is perhaps the most original and graceful of the many attempts made by Italian builders to fuse the mediæval and the classic styles. For Alberti attempted nothing less. A century elapsed before Palladio, approaching the problem from a different point of view, restored the antique in its purity, and erected in the Palazzo della Ragione of Vicenza an almost unique specimen of resuscitated Roman art. Internally, the beauty of the church is wholly due to its exquisite wall-ornaments. These consist for the most part of low reliefs in a soft white stone, many of them thrown out upon a blue ground in the style of Della Robbia. Allegorical figures designed with the purity of outline we admire in Botticelli, draperies that Burne Jones might copy, troops of singing boys in the manner of Donatello, great angels traced upon the stone so delicately that they seem to be rather drawn than sculptured, statuettes in niches, personifications of all arts and sciences alternating with half-bestial shapes of satyrs and sea-children :—such are the forms which fill the spaces of the chapel walls, and climb the pilasters, and fret the arches, in such abundance that had the whole church been finished as it was

designed, it would have presented one splendid though bizarre effect of incrustation. Heavy screens of Verona marble, emblazoned in open arabesques with the ciphers of Sigismondo and Isotta, with coats-of-arms, emblems, and medallion portraits, shut the chapels from the nave. Who produced all this sculpture it is difficult to say. Some of it is very good: much is indifferent. We may hazard the opinion that, besides Bernardo Ciuffagni, of whom Vasari speaks, some pupils of Donatello and Benedetto da Majano worked at it. The influence of the sculptors of Florence is everywhere perceptible. Whatever be the merit of these reliefs, there is no doubt that they fairly represent one of the most interesting moments in the history of modern art. Gothic inspiration had failed; the early Tuscan style of the Pisani had been worked out; Michael Angelo was yet far distant, and the abundance of classic models had not overwhelmed originality. The sculptors of the school of Ghiberti and Donatello, who are represented in this church, were essentially pictorial, preferring low to high relief, and relief in general to detached figures. Their style, like the style of Boiardo in poetry, of Botticelli in painting, is specific to Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century. Mediæval standards of taste were giving way to classical, Christian sentiment to Pagan; yet the imitation of the antique had not been carried so far as to efface the spontaneity of the artist, and enough remained of Christian feeling to tinge the fancy with a grave and sweet romance. The sculptor had the skill and mastery to express his slightest shade of thought with freedom, spirit, and precision. Yet his work showed no sign of conventionality, no adherence to prescribed rules. Every outline, every fold of drapery, every attitude, was pregnant, to the artist's own mind,

at any rate, with meaning. In spite of its symbolism, what he wrought was never mechanically figurative, but gifted with the independence of its own beauty, vital with an inbreathed spirit of life. It was a happy moment, when art had reached consciousness, and the artist had not yet become self-conscious. The hand and the brain then really worked together for the procreation of new forms of grace, not for the repetition of old models, or for the invention of the strange and startling. "Delicate, sweet, and captivating," are good adjectives to express the effect produced upon the mind by the contemplation even of the average work of this period. To study the flowing lines of the great angels traced upon the walls of the Chapel of Saint Sigismund in the Cathedral of Rimini, to follow the undulations of their drapery that seems to float, to feel the dignified urbanity of all their gestures, is like listening to one of those clear early Italian compositions for the voice, which surpasses in suavity of tone and grace of movement all that Music in her full-grown vigour has produced. There is indeed something infinitely charming in the crepuscular moments of the human mind. Whether it be the rath loveliness of an art still immature, or the wan beauty of art upon the wane—whether, in fact, the twilight be of morning or of evening, we find in the masterpieces of such periods a placid calm and chastened pathos, as of a spirit self-withdrawn from vulgar cares, which in the full light of meridian splendour is lacking. In the Church of San Francesco at Rimini the tempered clearness of the dawn is just about to broaden into day.

RAVENNA.

THE Emperor Augustus chose Ravenna for one of his two naval stations, and in course of time a new city arose by the sea-shore, which received the name of Portus Classis. Between this harbour and the mother city a third town sprang up, and was called Cæsarea. Time and neglect, the ravages of war, and the encroaching powers of Nature, have destroyed these settlements, and nothing now remains of the three cities but Ravenna. It would seem that in classical times Ravenna stood, like modern Venice, in the centre of a huge lagune, the fresh waters of the Ronco and the Po mixing with the salt waves of the Adriatic round its very walls. The houses of the city were built on piles; canals instead of streets formed the means of communication, and these were always filled with water artificially conducted from the southern estuary of the Po. Round Ravenna extended a vast morass, for the most part under shallow water, but rising at intervals into low islands like the Lido or Murano or Torcello which surround Venice. These islands were celebrated for their fertility: the vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, springing from a fat and fruitful soil, watered with constant moisture, and fostered by a mild sea-wind and liberal sunshine, yielded crops that for luxuriance and quality surpassed the harvests of any orchards on the mainland. All the conditions of life in old Ravenna seem to have resembled those of

modern Venice: the people went about in gondolas, and in the early morning barges laden with fresh fruit or meat and vegetables flocked from all quarters to the city of the sea.* Water also had to be procured from the neighbouring shore, for, as Martial says, a well at Ravenna was more valuable than a vineyard. Again, between the city and the mainland ran a long low causeway all across the lagune, like that on which the trains now glide into Venice. Strange to say, the air of Ravenna was remarkably salubrious: this fact, and the ease of life that prevailed there, and the security afforded by the situation of the town, rendered it a most desirable retreat for the monarchs of Italy during those troublous times in which the empire nodded to its fall. Honorius retired to its lagunes for safety; Odoacer, who dethroned the last Cæsar of the West, succeeded him; and was in turn supplanted by Theodoric the Ostrogoth. Ravenna, as we see it now, recalls the peaceful and half-Roman rule of the great Gothic king. His palace, his churches, and the mausoleum in which his daughter Amalasuntha laid the hero's bones, have survived the sieges of Belisarius and Astolphus, the conquest of Pepin, the bloody quarrels of Iconoclasts with the children of the Roman Church, the mediæval wars of Italy, the victory of Gaston de Foix, and still stand gorgeous with marbles and mosaics in spite of time and the decay of all around them.

As early as the sixth century, the sea had already retreated to such a distance from Ravenna that orchards and gardens were cultivated on the spot where once the galleys of the Cæsars rode at anchor. Groves of pines sprang up along the shore, and in their lofty tops the

* We may compare with Venice what is known about the ancient Hellenic city of Sybaris. Sybaris and Ravenna were the Greek and Roman Venice of antiquity.

music of the wind moved like the ghost of waves and breakers plunging upon distant sands. This Pinetum stretches along the shore of the Adriatic for about forty miles, forming a belt of variable width between the great marsh and the tumbling sea. From a distance the bare stems and velvet crowns of the pine-trees stand up like palms that cover an oasis on Arabian sands; but at a nearer view the trunks detach themselves from an inferior forest-growth of juniper and thorn and ash and oak, the tall roofs of the stately firs shooting their breadth of sheltering greenery above the lower and less sturdy brushwood. It is hardly possible to imagine a more beautiful and impressive scene than that presented by these long alleys of imperial pines. They grow so thickly one behind another, that we might compare them to the pipes of a great organ, or the pillars of a Gothic church, or the basaltic columns of the Giant's Causeway. Their tops are evergreen and laden with the heavy cones, from which Ravenna draws considerable wealth. Scores of peasants are quartered on the outskirts of the forest, whose business it is to scale the pines and rob them of their fruit at certain seasons of the year. Afterwards they dry the fir-cones in the sun, until the nuts which they contain fall out. The empty husks are sold for fire-wood, and the kernels in their stony shells reserved for exportation. You may see the peasants, men, women, and boys, sorting them by millions, drying and sifting them upon the open spaces of the wood, and packing them in sacks to send abroad through Italy. The *pinocchi* or kernels of the stone-pine are largely used in cookery, and those of Ravenna are prized for their good quality and aromatic flavour. When roasted or pounded, they taste like a softer and more mealy kind of almonds. The task of gathering this harvest is not a little

dangerous. They have to cut notches in the straight shafts, and having climbed, often to the height of eighty feet, to lean upon the branches, and detach the fir-cones with a pole—and this for every tree. Some lives, they say, are yearly lost in the business.

As may be imagined, the spaces of this great forest form the haunt of innumerable living creatures. Lizards run about by myriads in the grass. Doves coo among the branches of the pines, and nightingales pour their full-throated music all day and night from thickets of white-thorn and acacia. The air is sweet with aromatic scents: the resin of the pine and juniper, the may-flowers and acacia-blossoms, the violets that spring by thousands in the moss, the wild roses and faint honey-suckles which throw fragrant arms from bough to bough of ash or maple, join to make one most delicious perfume. And though the air upon the neighbouring marsh is poisonous, here it is dry, and spreads a genial health. The sea-wind, murmuring through these thickets at nightfall or misty sunrise, conveys no fever to the peasants stretched among their flowers. They watch the red rays of sunset flaming through the columns of the leafy hall, and flaring on its fretted rafters of entangled boughs; they see the stars come out, and Hesper gleam, an eye of brightness, among dewy branches; the moon walks silver-footed on the velvet tree-tops, while they sleep beside the camp-fires; fresh morning wakes them to the sound of birds and scent of thyme and twinkling of dewdrops on the grass around. Meanwhile ague, fever, and death have been stalking all night long about the plain, within a few yards of their couch, and not one pestilential breath has reached the charmed precincts of the forest.

You may ride or drive for miles along green aisles

between the pines in perfect solitude; and yet the creatures of the wood, the sunlight and the birds, the flowers and tall majestic columns at your side, prevent all sense of loneliness or fear. Huge oxen haunt the wilderness—grey creatures, with mild eyes and spreading horns and stealthy tread. Some are patriarchs of the forest, the fathers and the mothers of many generations who have been carried from their sides to serve in ploughs or waggons on the Lombard plain. Others are yearling calves, intractable and ignorant of labour. In order to subdue them to the yoke, it is requisite to take them very early from their native glades, or else they chafe and pine away with weariness. Then there is a sullen canal, which flows through the forest from the marshes to the sea; it is alive with frogs and newts and snakes. You may see these serpents basking on the surface among thickets of the flowering rush, or coiled about the lily leaves and flowers — lithe monsters, slippery and speckled, the tyrants of the fen.

It is said that when Dante was living at Ravenna he would spend whole days alone among the forest glades, thinking of Florence and her civil wars, and meditating cantos of his poem. Nor have the influences of the pine-wood failed to leave their trace upon his verse. The charm of its summer solitude seems to have sunk into his soul; for when he describes the whispering of winds and singing birds among the boughs of his terrestrial paradise, he says:—

"Non però dal lor esser dritto sparte
Tanto, che gli augelletti per le cime
Lasciassef d'operare ogni lor arte:
Ma con piena letizia l'aure prime,
Cantando, ricevano intra le foglie,
Che tenevan bordone alle sue rime

Tal, qual di ramo in ramo si raccoglie
Per la pineta in sul lito di Chiassi,
Quand' Eolo Scirocco fuor discioglie."

With these verses in our minds, while wandering down the grassy aisles, beside the waters of the solitary place, we seem to meet that lady singing as she went, and plucking flower by flower, "like Proserpine when Ceres lost a daughter, and she lost her spring." There, too, the vision of the griffin and the car, of singing maidens, and of Beatrice descending to the sound of Benedictus and of falling flowers, her flaming robe and mantle green as grass, and veil of white, and olive crown, all flashed upon the poet's inner eye, and he remembered how he bowed before her when a boy. There is yet another passage in which it is difficult to believe that Dante had not the pine-forest in his mind. When Virgil and the poet were waiting in anxiety before the gates of Dis, when the Furies on the wall were tearing their breasts and crying, "Venga Medusa, e si 'l farem di smalto," suddenly across the hideous river came a sound like that which whirlwinds make among the shattered branches and bruised stems of forest-trees; and Dante, looking out with fear upon the foam and spray and vapour of the flood, saw thousands of the damned flying before the face of one who forded Styx with feet unwet. "Like frogs," he says, "they fled, who scurry through the water at the sight of their foe, the serpent, till each squats and hides himself close to the ground." The picture of the storm among the trees might well have occurred to Dante's mind beneath the roof of pine-boughs. Nor is there any place in which the simile of the frogs and water-snake attains such dignity and grandeur. I must confess that till I

saw the ponds and marshes of Ravenna, I used to fancy that the comparison was somewhat below the greatness of the subject; but there so grave a note of solemnity and desolation is struck, the scale of Nature is so large, and the serpents coiling in and out among the lily leaves and flowers are so much in their right place, that they suggest a scene by no means unworthy of Dante's conception.

Nor is Dante the only singer who has invested this wood with poetical associations. It is well known that Boccaccio laid his story of "Honoria" in the pine-forest, and every student of English literature must be familiar with the noble tale in verse which Dryden has founded on this part of the "Decameron." We all of us have followed Theodore, and watched with him the tempest swelling in the grove, and seen the hapless ghost pursued by demon hounds and hunter down the glades. This story should be read while storms are gathering upon the distant sea, or thunder-clouds descending from the Apennines, and when the pines begin to rock and surge beneath the stress of labouring winds. Then runs the sudden flash of lightning like a rapier through the boughs, the rain streams hissing down, and the thunder "breaks like a whole sea overhead."

With the Pinetum the name of Byron will be for ever associated. During his two years' residence in Ravenna he used to haunt its wilderness, riding alone or in the company of friends. The inscription placed above the entrance to the house he occupied alludes to it as one of the objects which principally attracted the poet to the neighbourhood of Ravenna: "Impaziente di visitare l' antica selva, che inspirò gia il Divino e Giovanni Boccaccio." We know, however, that a more powerful attraction, in the person of the Countess Guiccioli, main-

tained his fidelity to "that place of old renown, once in the Adrian Sea, Ravenna."

Between the Bosco, as the people of Ravenna call this pine-wood, and the city, the marsh stretches for a distance of about three miles. It is a plain intersected by dykes and ditches, and mapped out into innumerable rice-fields. For more than half a year it lies under water, and during the other months exhales a pestilential vapour, which renders it as uninhabitable as the Roman Campagna; yet in spring-time this dreary flat is even beautiful. The young blades of the rice shoot up above the water, delicately green and tender. The ditches are lined with flowering rush and golden flags, while white and yellow lilies sleep in myriads upon the silent pools. Tamarisks wave their pink and silver tresses by the road, and wherever a plot of mossy earth emerges from the marsh, it gleams with purple orchises and flaming marigolds; but the soil beneath is so treacherous and spongy, that these splendid blossoms grow like flowers in dreams or fairy stories. You try in vain to pick them; they elude your grasp, and flourish in security beyond the reach of arm or stick.

Such is the site of the old town of Classis. Not a vestige of the Roman city remains, not a dwelling or a ruined tower, nothing but the ancient church of St Apollinare in Classe. Of all desolate buildings this is the most desolate. Not even the deserted grandeur of San Paolo beyond the walls of Rome can equal it. Its bare round campanile gazes at the sky, which here vaults only sea and plain—a perfect dome, star-spangled, like the roof of Galla Placidia's tomb. Ravenna lies low to west, the pine-wood stretches away in long monotony to east. There is nothing else to be seen except the spreading marsh, bounded by dim snowy Alps and purple Apen-

nines, so very far away that the level rack of summer clouds seem more attainable and real. What sunsets and sunrises that tower must see; what glaring lurid after-glows in August, when the red light scowls upon the pestilential fen; what sheets of sullen vapour rolling over it in autumn; what breathless heats, and rain-clouds big with thunder; what silences; what unimpeded blasts of winter winds! One old monk tends this deserted spot. He has the huge church, with its echoing aisles and marble columns and giddy bell-tower and cloistered corridors, all to himself. At rare intervals, priests from Ravenna come to sing some special mass at these cold altars; pious folks make vows to pray upon their mouldy steps and kiss the relics which are shown on great occasions. But no one stays; they hurry, after muttering their prayers, from the fever-stricken spot, reserving their domestic pieties and customary devotions for the brighter and newer chapels of the fashionable churches in Ravenna. So the old monk is left alone to sweep the marsh water from his church floor, and to keep the green moss from growing too thickly on its monuments. A clammy converva covers everything except the mosaics upon tribune, roof, and clerestory, which defy the course of age. Christ on his throne *sedet æternumque sedebit:* the saints around him glitter with their pitiless uncompromising eyes and wooden gestures, as if twelve centuries had not passed over them, and they were nightmares only dreamed last night, and rooted in a sick man's memory. For those gaunt and solemn forms there is no change of life or end of days. No fever touches them; no dampness of the wind and rain loosens their firm cement. They stare with senseless faces in bitter mockery of men who live and die and moulder away beneath. Their poor old

guardian told us it was a weary life. He has had the fever three times, and does not hope to survive many more Septembers. The very water that he drinks is brought him from Ravenna; for the vast fen, though it pours its overflow upon the church floor, and spreads like a lake around, is death to drink. The monk had a gentle woman's voice and mild brown eyes. What terrible crime had consigned him to this living tomb? For what past sorrow is he weary of his life? What anguish of remorse has driven him to such a solitude? Yet he looked simple and placid; his melancholy was subdued and calm, as if life were over for him, and he were waiting for death to come with a friend's greeting upon noiseless wings some summer night across the fen-lands in a cloud of soft destructive fever-mist.

Another monument upon the plain is worthy of a visit. It is the so-called Colonna dei Francesi, a cinquecento pillar of Ionic design, erected on the spot where Gaston de Foix expired victorious after one of the bloodiest battles ever fought. The Ronco, a straight sluggish stream, flows by the lonely spot; mason bees have covered with laborious stucco-work the scrolls and leafage of its ornaments, confounding epitaphs and trophies under their mud houses. A few cypress-trees stand round it, and the dogs and chickens of a neighbouring farmyard make it their rendezvous. Those mason bees are like posterity, which settles down upon the ruins of a Baalbec or a Luxor, setting up its tents, and filling the fair spaces of Hellenic or Egyptian temples with clay hovels. Nothing differs but the scale; and while the bees content themselves with filling up and covering, man destroys the silent places of the past which he appropriates.

In Ravenna itself, perhaps what strikes us most is the

abrupt transition everywhere discernible from monuments of vast antiquity to buildings of quite modern date. There seems to be no interval between the marbles and mosaics of Justinian or Theodoric and the insignificant frippery of the last century. The churches of Ravenna—San Vitale, St Apollinare, and the rest—are too well known, and have been too often described by enthusiastic antiquaries, to need a detailed notice in this place. Every one is aware that the ecclesiastical customs and architecture of the early Church can be studied in greater perfection here than elsewhere. Not even the basilicas and mosaics of Rome, nor those of Palermo and Monreale, are equal for historical interest to those of Ravenna. Yet there is not one single church which remains entirely unaltered and unspoiled. The imagination has to supply the atrium or outer portico from one building, the vaulted baptistery with its marble font from another, the pulpits and ambones from a third, the tribune from a fourth, the round brick bell-tower from a fifth, and then to cover all the concave roofs and chapel walls with grave and glittering mosaics.

There is nothing more beautiful in decorative art than the mosaics of such tiny buildings as the tomb of Galla Placidia or the chapel of the Bishop's Palace. They are like jewelled and enamelled cases; not an inch of wall can be seen which is not covered with elaborate patterns of the brightest colours. Tall date-palms spring from the floor with fruit and birds among their branches, and between them stand the pillars and apostles of the church. In the spandrels and lunettes above the arches and the windows angels fly with white extended wings. On every vacant place are scrolls and arabesques of foliage, —birds and beasts, doves drinking from the vase, and peacocks spreading gorgeous plumes—a maze of green

and gold and blue. Overhead, the vault is powdered with stars gleaming upon the deepest azure, and in the midst is set an aureole embracing the majestic head of Christ, or else the symbol of the sacred fish, or the hand of the Creator pointing from a cloud. In Galla Placidia's tomb these storied vaults spring above the sarcophagi of empresses and emperors, each lying in the place where he was laid more than twelve centuries ago. The light which struggles through the narrow windows serves to harmonise the brilliant hues and make a gorgeous gloom.

Besides these more general and decorative subjects, many of the churches are adorned with historical mosaics, setting forth the Bible narrative or incidents from the life of Christian emperors and kings. In St Apollinare Nuovo there is a most interesting treble series of such mosaics extending over both walls of the nave. On the left hand, as we enter, we see the town of Classis; on the right the palace of Theodoric, its doors and loggie rich with curtains, and its friezes blazing with coloured ornaments. From the city gate of Classis virgins issue, and proceed in a long line until they reach Madonna seated on a throne, with Christ upon her knees, and the three kings in adoration at her feet. From Theodoric's palace door a similar procession of saints and martyrs carry us to Christ surrounded by archangels. Above this double row of saints and virgins stand the fathers and prophets of the Church, and highest underneath the roof are pictures from the life of our Lord. It will be remembered in connection with these subjects that the women sat upon the left and the men upon the right side of the church. Above the tribune, at the east end of the church, it was customary to represent the Creative Hand, or the monogram of the Saviour, or the head of Christ

with the letters *A* and *Ω*. Moses and Elijah frequently stand on either side to symbolise the transfiguration, while the saints and bishops specially connected with the church appeared upon a lower row. Then on the side walls were depicted such subjects as Justinian and Theodora among their courtiers, or the grant of the privileges of the church to its first founder from imperial patrons, with symbols of the old Hebraic ritual—Abel's lamb, the sacrifice of Isaac, Melchisedec's offering of bread and wine,—which were regarded as the types of Christian ceremonies. The baptistery was adorned with appropriate mosaics representing Christ's baptism in Jordan.

Generally speaking, one is struck with the dignity of these designs, and especially with the combined majesty and sweetness of the face of Christ. The sense for harmony of hue displayed in their composition is marvellous. It would be curious to trace in detail the remnants of classical treatment which may be discerned—Jordan, for instance, pours his water from an urn like a river-god crowned with sedge—or to show what points of ecclesiastical tradition are established by these ancient monuments. We find Mariolatry already imminent, the names of the three kings, Kaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, the four evangelists as we now recognise them, and many of the rites and vestments which Ritualists of all denominations regard with superstitious reverence.

There are two sepulchral monuments in Ravenna which cannot be passed over unnoticed. The one is that of Theodoric the Goth, crowned by its semi-sphere of solid stone, a mighty tomb, well worthy of the conqueror and king. It stands in a green field, surrounded by acacias, where the nightingales sing ceaselessly in May. The mason bees have covered it, and the water

has invaded its sepulchral vaults. In spite of many trials, it seems that human art is unable to pump out the pond and clear the frogs and efts from the chamber where the great Goth was laid by Amalasuntha.

The other is Dante's temple, with its bas-relief and withered garlands. The story of his burial, and of the discovery of his real tomb, is fresh in the memory of every one. But the "little cupola, more neat than solemn," of which Lord Byron speaks, will continue to be the goal of many a pilgrimage. For myself—though I remember Chateaubriand's bareheaded genuflection on its threshold, Alfieri's passionate prostration at the altar-tomb, and Byron's offering of poems on the poet's shrine—I confess that a single canto of the "Inferno," a single passage of the "Vita Nuova," seems more full of soul-stirring associations than the place where, centuries ago, the mighty dust was laid. It is the spirit that lives and makes alive. And Dante's spirit seems more present with us under the pine-branches of the Bosco than beside his real or fancied tomb. "He is risen,"—"Lo, I am with you alway,"—these are the words that ought to haunt us in a burying-ground. There is something affected and self-conscious in overpowering grief or enthusiasm or humiliation at a tomb.

PARMA.

PARMA is perhaps the brightest *Residenzstadt* of the second class in Italy. Built on a sunny and fertile tract of the Lombard plain, within view of the Alps, and close beneath the shelter of the Apennines, it shines like a well-set gem with stately towers and cheerful squares in the midst of verdure. The cities of Lombardy are all like large country houses: walking out of their gates, you seem to be stepping from a door or window that opens on a trim and beautiful garden, where mulberry-tree is married to mulberry by festoons of vines, and where the maize and sun-flower stand together in rows between patches of flax and hemp. But it is not in order to survey the union of well-ordered husbandry with the civilities of ancient city-life that we break the journey at Parma between Milan and Bologna. We are attracted rather by the fame of one great painter, whose work, though it may be studied piecemeal in many galleries of Europe, in Parma has a fulness, largeness, and mastery that can nowhere else be found. In Parma alone Correggio challenges comparison with Raphael, with Tintoret, with all the supreme decorative painters who have deigned to make their art the handmaid of architecture. Yet even in the cathedral and the church of San Giovanni, where Correggio's frescoes cover cupola and chapel wall, we could scarcely comprehend his greatness now—so cruelly have time and neglect dealt

with those delicate dream shadows of celestial fairy-land —were it not for an interpreter, who consecrated a lifetime to the task of translating his master's poetry of fresco into the prose of engraving. That man was Paolo Toschi—a name to be ever venerated by all lovers of the arts; since without his guidance we should hardly know what to seek for in the ruined splendours of the domes of Parma, or even seeking, how to find the object of our search. Toschi's labour was more effectual than that of a restorer however skilful, more loving than that of a follower however faithful. He respected Correggio's handiwork with religious scrupulousness, adding not a line or tone or touch of colour to the fading frescoes; but he lived among them, aloft on scaffoldings, and face to face with the originals which he designed to reproduce. By long and close familiarity, by obstinate and patient interrogation, he divined Correggio's secret, and was able at last to see clearly through the mists of cobweb and mildew and altar smoke, and through the still more cruel travesty of so-called restoration. What he discovered, he faithfully committed first to paper in water colours, and then to copperplate with the burin, so that we enjoy the privilege of seeing Correggio's masterpieces as Toschi saw them, with the eyes of genius and of love and of long scientific study. It is not too much to say that some of Correggio's most charming compositions—for example, the dispute of St Augustine and St John—have been resuscitated from the grave by Toschi's skill. The original offers nothing but a mouldering surface from which the painter's work has dropped in scales. The engraving presents a design which we doubt not was Correggio's, for it corresponds in all particulars to the style and spirit of the master. To be critical in dealing with so successful an achievement of

restoration and translation is difficult. Yet it may be admitted once and for all that Toschi has not unfrequently enfeebled his original. Under his touch Correggio loses somewhat of his sensuous audacity, his dithyrambic ecstasy, and approaches the ordinary standard of prettiness and graceful beauty. The Diana of the Camera di San Paolo, for instance, has the strong calm splendour of a goddess: the same Diana in Toschi's engraving seems about to smile with girlish joy. In a word, the engraver was a man of a more common stamp—more timid and more conventional than the painter. But this is after all a trifling deduction from the value of his work.

Our debt to Paolo Toschi is such that it would be ungrateful not to seek some details of his life. The few that can be gathered even at Parma are brief and bald enough. The newspaper articles and funeral panegyrics which refer to him, are as barren as all such occasional notices in Italy have always been; the panegyrist seeming more anxious about his own style than eager to communicate information. Yet a bare outline of Toschi's biography may be supplied. He was born at Parma in 1788. His father was cashier of the post-office, and his mother's name was Anna Maria Brest. Early in his youth he studied painting at Parma under Biagio Martini; and in 1809 he went to Paris, where he learned the art of engraving from Bervic and of etching from Oortman. In Paris he contracted an intimate friendship with the painter Gérard. But after ten years he returned to Parma, where he established a company and school of engravers in concert with his friend Antonio Isac. Maria Louisa, the then Duchess, under whose patronage the arts flourished at Parma (witness Bodoni's exquisite typography), soon recognised his merit, and appointed him Director of the Ducal Academy.

He then formed the project of engraving a series of the whole of Correggio's frescoes. The undertaking was a vast one. Both the cupolas of St John and the cathedral, together with the vault of the apse of San Giovanni * and various portions of the side aisles, and the so-called Camera di San Paolo, are covered by frescoes of Correggio and his pupil Parmegiano. These frescoes have suffered so much from neglect and time, and from unintelligent restoration, that it is difficult in many cases to determine their true character. Yet Toschi did not content himself with selections, or shrink from the task of deciphering and engraving the whole. He formed a school of disciples, among whom were Carlo Raimondi of Milan, Antonio Costa of Venice, Edward Eichens of Berlin, Aloisio Juvara of Naples, Antonio Dalcò, Giuseppe Magnani, and Lodovico Bisola of Parma, and employed them as assistants in his work. Death overtook him in 1854, before it was finished, and now the water-colour drawings which are exhibited in the Gallery of Parma prove to what extent the achievement fell short of his design. Enough, however, was accomplished to place the chief masterpieces of Correggio beyond the possibility of utter oblivion.

To the piety of his pupil Carlo Raimondi, the bearer of a name illustrious in the annals of engraving, we owe a striking portrait of Toschi. The master is represented on his seat upon the scaffold in the dizzy half-light of the dome. The shadowy forms of saints and angels are around him. He has raised his eyes from his cartoon to study one of these. In his right hand is the opera-

* The fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin upon the semi-dome of San Giovanni is the work of a copyist, Cesare Aretusi. But part of the original fresco, which was removed in 1684, exists in a good state of preservation at the end of the long gallery of the library.

glass with which he scrutinises the details of distant groups. The upturned face, with its expression of contemplative intelligence, is like that of an astronomer accustomed to commerce with things above the sphere of common life, and ready to give account of all that he has gathered from his observation of a world not ours. In truth the world created by Correggio and interpreted by Toschi is very far removed from that of actual existence. No painter has infused a more distinct individuality into his work, realising by imaginative force and powerful projection an order of beauty peculiar to himself, before which it is impossible to remain quite indifferent. We must either admire the manner of Correggio, or else shrink from it with the distaste which sensual art is apt to stir in natures of a severe or simple type.

What, then, is the Correggiosity of Correggio? In other words, what is the characteristic which, proceeding from the personality of the artist, is impressed on all his work? The answer to this question, though by no means simple, may perhaps be won by a process of gradual analysis. The first thing that strikes us in the art of Correggio is, that he has aimed at the realistic representation of pure unrealities. His saints and angels are beings the like of whom we have hardly seen upon the earth. Yet they are displayed before us with all the movement and the vivid truth of nature. Next we feel that what constitutes the superhuman, visionary quality of these creatures, is their uniform beauty of a merely sensuous type. They are all created for pleasure, not for thought or passion or activity or heroism. The uses of their brains, their limbs, their every feature, end in enjoyment; innocent and radiant wantonness is the condition of their whole existence. Correggio conceived the universe under the one mood of sensuous joy: his

world was bathed in luxurious light; its inhabitants were capable of little beyond a soft voluptuousness. Over the domain of tragedy he had no sway, and very rarely did he attempt to enter on it: nothing, for example, can be feebler than his endeavour to express anguish in the distorted features of Madonna, St John, and the Magdalen, who are bending over the dead body of a Christ extended in the attitude of languid repose. In like manner he could not deal with subjects which demand a pregnancy of intellectual meaning. He paints the three Fates like young and joyous Bacchantes. Place rose-garlands and thyrsi in their hands instead of the distaff and the thread of human destinies, and they might figure appropriately upon the panels of a banquet-chamber in Pompeii. In this respect Correggio might be termed the Rossini of painting. The melodies of the *Stabat Mater—Fac ut portem* or *Quis est homo*—are the exact analogues in music of Correggio's voluptuous renderings of grave or mysterious motives. Nor, again, did he possess that severe and lofty art of composition which subordinates the fancy to the reason, and which seeks for the highest intellectual beauty in a kind of architectural harmony supreme above the melodies of gracefulness in detail. The Florentines and those who shared their spirit—Michael Angelo and Leonardo and Raphael—deriving this principle of design from the geometrical art of the middle ages, converted it to the noblest uses in their vast well-ordered compositions. But Correggio ignored the laws of scientific construction. It was enough for him to produce a splendid and brilliant effect by the life and movement of his figures, and by the intoxicating beauty of his forms. His type of beauty, too, is by no means elevated. Leonardo painted souls whereof the

features and the limbs are but an index. The charm of Michael Angelo's ideal is like a flower upon a tree of rugged strength. Raphael aims at the loveliness which cannot be disjoined from goodness. But Correggio is contented with bodies "delicate and desirable." His angels are genii disimprisoned from the perfumed chalices of flowers, houris of an erotic paradise, elemental spirits of nature wantoning in Eden in her prime. To accuse the painter of conscious immorality or of what is stigmatised as sensuality, would be as ridiculous as to class his seraphic beings among the products of the Christian imagination. They belong to the generation of the fauns; like fauns, they combine a certain savage wildness, a dithyrambic ecstasy of inspiration, a delight in rapid movement as they revel amid clouds or flowers, with the permanent and all-pervading sweetness of the master's style. When infantine or childlike, these celestial sylphs are scarcely to be distinguished for any noble quality of beauty from Murillo's cherubs, and are far less divine than the choir of children who attend Madonna in Titian's "Assumption." But in their boyhood and their prime of youth, they acquire a fulness of sensuous vitality and a radiance that are peculiar to Correggio. The lily-bearer who helps to support St Thomas beneath the dome of the cathedral at Parma, the groups of seraphs who crowd behind the Incoronata of San Giovanni, and the two wild-eyed open-mouthed St Johns stationed at each side of the celestial throne, are among the most splendid instances of the adolescent loveliness conceived by Correggio. Where the painter found their models may be questioned but not answered; for he has made them of a different fashion from the race of mortals: no court of Roman emperor or Turkish sultan, though stocked with the flowers of Bithynian and

Circassian youth, have seen their like. Mozart's Cherubino seems to have sat for all of them. At any rate they incarnate the very spirit of the songs he sings.

As a consequence of this predilection for sensuous and voluptuous forms, Correggio had no power of imagining grandly or severely. Satisfied with material realism in his treatment even of sublime mysteries, he converts the hosts of heaven into a "fricassee of frogs," according to the old epigram. His apostles, gazing after the Virgin who has left the earth, are thrown into attitudes so violent and so dramatically foreshortened, that seen from below upon the pavement of the cathedral, little of their form is distinguishable except legs and arms in vehement commotion. Very different is Titian's conception of this scene. To express the spiritual meaning, the emotion of Madonna's transit, with all the pomp which colour and splendid composition can convey, is Titian's sole care; whereas Correggio appears to have been satisfied with realising the tumult of heaven rushing to meet earth, and earth straining upwards to ascend to heaven in violent commotion—a very orgasm of frenetic rapture. The essence of the event is forgotten: its external manifestation alone is presented to the eye; and only the accessories of beardless angels and cloud-encumbered cherubs are really beautiful amid a surge of limbs in restless movement. More dignified, because designed with more repose, is the Apocalypse of St John painted upon the cupola of San Giovanni. The apostles throned on clouds, with which the dome is filled, gaze upward to one point. Their attitudes are noble; their form is heroic; in their eyes there is the strange ecstatic look by which Correggio interpreted his sense of supernatural vision: it is a gaze not of contemplation or deep thought, but

of wild half-savage joy, as if these saints also had become the elemental genii of cloud and air, spirits emergent from ether, the salamanders of an empyrean intolerable to mortal sense. The point on which their eyes converge, the culmination of their vision, is the figure of Christ. Here all the weakness of Correggio's method is revealed. He had undertaken to realise by no ideal allegorical suggestion, by no symbolism of architectural grouping, but by actual prosaic measurement, by corporeal form in subjection to the laws of perspective and foreshortening, things which in their very essence admit of only a figurative revelation. Therefore his Christ, the centre of all those earnest eyes, is contracted to a shape in which humanity itself is mean, a sprawling figure which irresistibly reminds one of a frog. The clouds on which the saints repose are opaque and solid; cherubs in countless multitudes, a swarm of merry children, crawl about upon these feather beds of vapour, creep between the legs of the apostles, and play at bopeep behind their shoulders. There is no propriety in their appearance there. They take no interest in the beatific vision. They play no part in the celestial symphony; nor are they capable of more than merely infantine enjoyment. Correggio has sprinkled them lavishly like living flowers about his cloudland, because he could not sustain a grave and solemn strain of music, but was forced by his temperament to overlay the melody with roulades. Gazing at these frescoes, the thought came to me that Correggio was like a man listening to sweetest flute-playing, and translating phrase after phrase as they passed through his fancy into laughing faces, breezy tresses, and rolling mists. Sometimes a grander cadence reached his ear; and then St Peter with the keys, or St Augustine of the mighty brow, or the inspired eyes of St John, took

form beneath his pencil. But the light airs returned, and rose and lily faces bloomed again for him among the clouds. It is not therefore in dignity or sublimity that Correggio excels, but in artless grace and melodious tenderness. The Madonna della Scala clasping her baby with a caress which the little child returns, St Catherine leaning in a rapture of ecstatic love to wed the infant Christ, St Sebastian in the bloom of almost boyish beauty, are the so-called sacred subjects to which the painter was adequate, and which he has treated with the voluptuous tenderness we find in his pictures of Leda and Danae and Io. Could these saints and martyrs descend from Correggio's canvas, and take flesh, and breathe, and begin to live; of what high action, of what grave passion, of what exemplary conduct in any walk of life would they be capable? That is the question which they irresistibly suggest; and we are forced to answer, None! The moral and religious world did not exist for Correggio. His art was but a way of seeing carnal beauty in a dream that had no true relation to reality.

Correggio's sensibility to light and colour was exactly on a par with his feeling for form. He belongs to the poets of chiaroscuro and the poets of colouring; but in both regions he maintains the individuality so strongly expressed in his choice of purely sensuous beauty. Tintoretto makes use of light and shade for investing his great compositions with dramatic intensity. Rembrandt interprets sombre and fantastic moods of the mind by golden gloom and silvery irradiation, translating thought into the language of penumbral mystery. Leonardo studies the laws of light scientifically, so that the proper roundness and effect of distance should be accurately rendered, and all the subtleties of nature's

smiles be mimicked. Correggio is content with fixing on his canvas the *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα*, the many-twinkling laughter of light in motion, rained down through fleecy clouds or trembling foliage, melting into half-shadows, bathing and illuminating every object with a soft caress. There are no tragic contrasts of splendour sharply defined on blackness, no mysteries of half-felt and pervasive twilight, no studied accuracies of noonday clearness in his work. Light and shadow are woven together on his figures like an impalpable Coan gauze, aerial and transparent, enhancing the palpitations of voluptuous movement which he loved. His colouring, in like manner, has none of the superb and mundane pomp which the Venetians affected; it does not glow or burn or beat the fire of gems into our brain; joyous and wanton, it seems to be exactly such a beauty-bloom as sense requires for its satiety. There is nothing in his hues to provoke deep passion or to stimulate the yearnings of the soul: the pure blushes of the dawn and the crimson pyres of sunset are nowhere in the world that he has painted. But that chord of jocund colour which may fitly be married to the smiles of light, the blues which are found in laughing eyes, the pinks that tinge the cheeks of early youth, and the warm yet silvery tones of healthy flesh, mingle as in a marvellous pearl-shell on his pictures. Both chiaroscuro and colouring have this supreme purpose in art, to affect the sense like music, and like music to create a mood in the soul of the spectator. Now the mood which Correggio stimulates is one of natural and thoughtless pleasure. To feel his influence, and at the same moment to be the subject of strong passion, or fierce lust, or heroic resolve, or profound contemplation, or pensive melancholy, is impossible. Wantonness,

innocent because unconscious of sin, immoral because incapable of any serious purpose, is the quality which prevails in all that he has painted. The pantomimes of a Mahommedan paradise might be put upon the stage after patterns supplied by this least spiritual of painters.

It follows from this analysis that the Correggiosity of Correggio, that which sharply distinguished him from all previous artists, was the faculty of painting a purely voluptuous dream of beautiful beings in perpetual movement, beneath the laughter of morning light, in a world of never-failing April hues. When he attempts to depart from the fairy-land of which he was the Prospero, and to match himself with the masters of sublime thought or earnest passion, he proves his weakness. But within his own magic circle he reigns supreme, no other artist having blended the witcheries of colouring, chiaroscuro, and faunlike loveliness of form into a harmony so perfect in its sensuous charm. Bewitched by the strains of the siren, we pardon affectations of expression, emptiness of meaning, feebleness of composition, exaggerated and melodramatic attitudes. There is what Goethe called a demonic influence in the art of Correggio: "in poetry," said Goethe to Eckermann, "especially in that which is unconscious, before which reason and understanding fall short, and which therefore produces effects so far surpassing all conception, there is always something demonic." It is not to be wondered that Correggio, possessed of this demonic power in the highest degree, and working to a purely sensuous end, should have exercised a fatal influence over art. His successors, attracted by an intoxicating loveliness which they could not analyse, which had nothing in common with the reason or the understanding, but was like a glamour

cast upon the soul in its most secret sensibilities, threw themselves blindly into the imitation of Correggio's faults. His affectation, his vacuity, his neglect of composition, his sensuous realism, his all-pervading sweetness, his infantine prettiness, his substitution of thaumaturgical effects for conscientious labour, admitted only too easy imitation, and were but too congenial with the spirit of the late Renaissance. Cupolas through the length and breadth of Italy began to be covered with clouds and simpering cherubs in the convulsions of artificial ecstasy. The attenuated elegance of Parmigiano, the attitudinising of Anselmi's saints and angels, and a general sacrifice of what is solid and enduring to sentimental gewgaws on the part of all painters who had submitted to the magic of Correggio, proved how easy it was to go astray with the great master. Meanwhile no one could approach him in that which was truly his own—the delineation of a transient moment in the life of sensuous beauty, the painting of a smile on Nature's face, when light and colour tremble in harmony with the movement of joyous living creatures. Another demonic nature of a far more powerful type contributed his share to the ruin of art in Italy. Michael Angelo's constrained attitudes and muscular anatomy were imitated by painters and sculptors, who thought that the grand style lay in the presentation of theatrical athletes, but who could not seize the secret whereby the great master made even the bodies of men and women—colossal trunks and writhen limbs—interpret the meanings of his deep and melancholy soul. It is a sad law of progress in art, that when the æsthetic impulse is on the wane, artists should perforce select to follow the weakness rather than the vigour of their predecessors. While painting was in

the ascendant, Raphael could take the best of Perugino and discard the worst; in its decadence Parmigiano reproduces the affectations of Correggio, and Bernini carries the exaggerations of Michael Angelo to absurdity. All arts describe a parabola. The force which produces them causes them to rise throughout their growth up to a certain point, and then to descend more gradually in a long and slanting line of regular declension. There is no real break of continuity. The end is the result of simple exhaustion. Thus the last of our Elizabethan dramatists, Shirley and Crowne and Killigrew, pushed to its ultimate conclusion the principle inherent in Marlowe, not attempting to break new ground, nor imitating the excellences so much as the defects of their forerunners. Thus too the Pointed style of architecture in England gave birth first to what is called the Decorated, next to the Perpendicular, and finally expired in the Tudor. Each step was a step of progress—at first for the better—at last for the worse—but logical, continuous, necessitated.

It is difficult to leave Correggio without at least posing the question of the difference between moralised and merely sensual art. Is all art excellent in itself and good in its effect that is beautiful and earnest? There is no doubt that Correggio's work is in a way most beautiful; and it bears unmistakable signs of the master having given himself with single-hearted devotion to the expression of that phase of loveliness which he could apprehend. In so far we must admit that his art is both excellent and solid. Yet we are unable to conceive that any human being could be made better—stronger for endurance, more fitted for the uses of the world, more sensitive to what is noble in nature—by its contemplation. At the best Correggio does but please us in our lighter moments, and we are

apt to feel that the pleasure he has given is of an enervating kind. To expect obvious morality of any artist is confessedly absurd. It is not the artist's province to preach, or even to teach, except by remote suggestion. Yet the mind of the artist may be highly moralised, and then he takes rank not merely with the ministers to refined pleasure, but also with the educators of the world. He may, for example, be penetrated with a just sense of humanity like Shakspere, or with a sublime temperance like Sophocles; instinct with prophetic intuition like Michael Angelo, or with passionate experience like Beethoven. The mere sight of the work of Pheidias is like breathing pure health-giving air. Milton and Dante were steeped in religious patriotism; Goethe was pervaded with philosophy, and Balzac with scientific curiosity. Ariosto, Cervantes, and even Boccaccio are masters in the mysteries of common life. In all these cases the tone of the artist's mind is felt throughout his work: what he paints, or sings, or writes, conveys a lesson while it pleases. On the other hand, depravity in an artist or a poet percolates through work which has in it nothing positive of evil, and a very miasma of poisonous influence may rise from the apparently innocuous creations of a tainted soul. Now Correggio is moralised in neither way—neither as a good nor as a bad man, neither as an acute thinker nor as a deliberate voluptuary. He is simply sensuous. On his own ground he is even very fresh and healthy: his delineation of youthful maternity, for example, is as true as it is beautiful; and his sympathy with the gleefulness of children is devoid of affectation. We have then only to ask ourselves whether the defect in him of all thought and feeling which is not at once capable of graceful fleshly incarnation, be sufficient to lower him in the scale

of artists. This question must of course be answered according to our definition of the purposes of art. There is no doubt that the most highly organised art—that which absorbs the most numerous human qualities and effects a harmony between the most complex elements—is the noblest. Therefore the artist who combines moral elevation and power of thought with a due appreciation of sensual beauty, is more elevated and more beneficial than one whose domain is simply that of carnal loveliness. Correggio, if this be so, must take a comparatively low rank. Just as we welcome the beautiful athlete for the radiant life that is in him, but bow before the personality of Sophocles, whose perfect form enshrined a noble and highly educated soul, so we gratefully accept Correggio for his grace, while we approach the consummate art of Michael Angelo with reverent awe. It is necessary in æsthetics as elsewhere to recognise a hierarchy of excellence, the grades of which are determined by the greater or less comprehensiveness of the artist's nature expressed in his work. At the same time, the calibre of the artist's genius must be estimated; for eminent greatness even of a narrow kind will always command our admiration: and the amount of his originality has also to be taken into account. What is unique has, for that reason alone, a claim on our consideration. Judged in this way, Correggio deserves a place, say, in the sweet planet Venus, above the moon and above Mercury, among the artists who have not advanced beyond the contemplations which find their proper outcome in love. Yet, even thus, he aids the culture of humanity. "We should take care," said Goethe, apropos of Byron, to Eckermann, "not to be always looking for culture in the decidedly pure and moral. Everything that is great promotes cultivation as soon as we are aware of it."

MONTE GENEROSO.

The long hot days of Italian summer were settling down on plain and country when, in the last week of May, we travelled northward from Florence and Bologna seeking coolness. That was very hard to find in Lombardy. The days were long and sultry, the nights short, without a respite from the heat. Milan seemed a furnace, though in the Duomo and the narrow shady streets there was a twilight darkness which at least looked cool. Long may it be before the northern spirit of improvement has taught the Italians to despise the wisdom of their forefathers, who built those sombre streets of palaces with overhanging eaves, that, almost meeting, form a shelter from the fiercest sun. The lake country was even worse than the towns; the sunlight lay all day asleep upon the shining waters, and no breeze came to stir their surface or to lift the tepid veil of haze, through which the stony mountains, with their yet unmelted patches of winter snow, glared as if in mockery of coolness.

Then we heard of a new inn, which had just been built by an enterprising Italian doctor below the very top of Monte Generoso. There was a picture of it in the hotel at Cadenabbia, but this gave but little idea of any particular beauty. A big square house, with many windows, and the usual ladies on mules, and guides with alpenstocks, advancing towards it, and

some round bushes growing near, was all it showed. Yet there hung the real Monte Generoso above our heads, and we thought it must be cooler on its height than by the lake-shore. To find coolness was the great point with us just then. Moreover, some one talked of the wonderful plants that grew among its rocks, and of its grassy slopes enamelled with such flowers as make our cottage gardens at home gay in summer, not to speak of others rarer and peculiar to the region of the Southern Alps. Indeed, the Generoso has a name for flowers, and it deserves it, as we presently found.

This mountain is fitted by its position for commanding one of the finest views in the whole range of the Lombard Alps. A glance at the map shows that. Standing out pre-eminent among the chain of lower hills to which it belongs, the lakes of Lugano and Como with their long arms enclose it on three sides, while on the fourth the plain of Lombardy with its many cities, its rich pasture-lands and corn-fields intersected by winding river-courses and straight interminable roads, advances to its very foot. No place could be better chosen for surveying that contrasted scene of plain and mountain, which forms the great attraction of the outlying buttresses of the central Alpine mass. The superiority of the Monte Generoso to any of the similar eminences on the northern outskirts of Switzerland is great. In richness of colour, in picturesqueness of suggestion, in sublimity and breadth of prospect, its advantages are incontestable. The reasons for this superiority are obvious. On the Italian side the transition from mountain to plain is far more abrupt; the atmosphere being clearer, a larger sweep of distance is within our vision; again, the sunlight blazes all day long upon the very front and forehead of the distant

Alpine chain, instead of merely slanting along it, as it does upon the northern side.

From Mendrisio, the village at the foot of the mountain, an easy mule-path leads to the hotel, winding first through English-looking hollow lanes with real hedges, which are rare in this country, and English primroses beneath them. Then comes a forest region of luxuriant chestnut-trees, giants with pink boles just bursting into late leafage, yellow and tender, but too thin as yet for shade. A little higher up, the chestnuts are displaced by wild laburnums bending under their weight of flowers. The graceful branches meet above our heads, sweeping their long tassels against our faces as we ride beneath them, while the air for a good mile is full of fragrance. It is strange to be reminded in this blooming labyrinth of the dusty suburb roads and villa gardens of London. The laburnum is pleasant enough in St John's Wood or the Regent's Park in May—a tame domesticated thing of brightness amid smoke and dust. But it is another joy to see it flourishing in its own home, clothing acres of the mountain-side in a very splendour of spring-colour, mingling its paler blossoms with the golden broom of our own hills, and with the silver of the hawthorn and wild cherry. Deep beds of lilies-of-the-valley grow everywhere beneath the trees; and in the meadows purple columbines, white asphodels, the Alpine spiræa, tall, with feathery leaves, blue scabius, golden hawkweeds, turkscap lilies, and, better than all, the exquisite narcissus poeticus, with its crimson-tipped cup, and the pure pale lilies of San Bruno, are crowded in a maze of dazzling brightness. Higher up the laburnums disappear, and flaunting crimson peonies gleam here and there upon the rocks, until at length the gentians and white ranuncu-

luses of the higher Alps displace the less hardy flowers of Italy.

About an hour below the summit of the mountain we came upon the inn, a large clean barrack, with scanty furniture and snowy wooden floors, guiltless of carpets. It is big enough to hold about a hundred guests; and Doctor Pasta, who built it, a native of Mendrisio, was gifted either with much faith or with a real prophetic instinct. Anyhow he deserves commendation for his spirit of enterprise. As yet the house is little known to English travellers: it is mostly frequented by Italians from Milan, Novara, and other cities of the plain, who call it the Italian Righi, and come to it, as cockneys go to Richmond, for noisy picnic excursions, or at most for a few weeks' *villegiatura* in the summer heats. When we were there in May the season had scarcely begun, and the only inmates besides ourselves were a large party from Milan, ladies and gentlemen in holiday guise, who came, stayed one night, climbed the peak at sunrise, and departed amid jokes and shouting and half-childish play, very unlike the doings of a similar party in sober England. After that the stillness of death descended on the mountain, and the sun shone day after day upon that great view which seemed created only for ourselves. And what a view it was! The plain stretching up to the high horizon, where a misty range of pink cirrus-clouds alone marked the line where earth ended and the sky began, was islanded with cities and villages innumerable, basking in the hazy shimmering heat. Milan, seen through the doctor's telescope, displayed its Duomo perfect as a microscopic shell, with all its exquisite fretwork, and Napoleon's arch of triumph surmounted by the four tiny horses, as in a fairy's dream. Far off, long silver lines marked

the lazy course of Po and Ticino, while little lakes like Varese and the lower end of Maggiore spread themselves out, connecting the mountains with the plain.

Five minutes' walk from the hotel brought us to a ridge where the precipice fell suddenly and almost sheer over one arm of Lugano Lake. Sullenly outstretched asleep it lay beneath us, coloured with the tints of fluor-spar, or with the changeful green and azure of a peacock's breast. The depth appeared immeasurable. San Salvadore had receded into insignificance: the houses and churches and villas of Lugano bordered the lake-shore with an uneven line of whiteness. And over all there rested a blue mist of twilight and of haze, contrasting with the clearness of the peaks above. It was sunset when we first came here; and, wave beyond wave, the purple Italian hills tossed their crested summits to the foot of a range of stormy clouds that shrouded the high Alps. Behind the clouds was sunset, clear and golden; but the mountains had put on their mantle for the night, and the hem of their garment was all we were to see. And yet—over the edge of the topmost ridge of cloud, what was that long hard line of black, too solid and immovable for cloud, rising into four sharp needles clear and well defined? Surely it must be the familiar outline of Monte Rosa itself, the form which every one who loves the Alps knows well by heart, which picture-lovers know from Ruskin's woodcut in the "Modern Painters." For a moment only the vision stayed: then clouds swept over it again, and from the place where the empress of the Alps had been, a pillar of mist shaped like an angel's wing, purple and tipped with gold, shot up against the pale green sky. That cloud-world was a pageant in itself, as grand and more gorgeous perhaps than the

mountains would have been. Deep down through the hollows of the Simplon a thunderstorm was driving; and we saw forked flashes once and again, as in a distant world, lighting up the valleys for a moment, and leaving the darkness blacker behind them as the storm blurred out the landscape forty miles away. Darkness was coming to us too, though our sky was clear and the stars were shining brightly. At our feet the earth was folding itself to sleep; the plain was wholly lost; little islands of white mist had formed themselves, and settled down upon the lakes and on their marshy estuaries; the birds were hushed; the gentian-cups were filling to the brim with dew. Night had descended on the mountain and the plain; the show was over.

The dawn was whitening in the east next morning, when we again scrambled through the dwarf beechwood to the precipice above the lake. Like an ink-blot it lay, unruffled, slumbering sadly. Broad sheets of vapour brooded on the plain, telling of miasma and fever, of which we on the mountain, in the pure cool air, knew nothing. The Alps were all there now—cold, unreal, stretching like a phantom line of snowy peaks, from the sharp pyramids of Monte Viso and the Grivola in the west to the distant Bernina and the Ortler in the east. Supreme among them towered Monte Rosa—queenly, triumphant, gazing down in proud pre-eminence, as she does when seen from any point of the Italian plain. There is no mountain like her. Mont Blanc himself is scarcely so regal; and she seems to know it, for even the clouds sweep humbled round her base, girdling her at most, but leaving her crown clear and free. Now, however, there were no clouds to be seen in all the sky. The mountains had

a strange unshriven look, as if waiting to be blessed. Above them, in the cold grey air, hung a low black arch of shadow, the shadow of the bulk of the huge earth, which still concealed the sun. Slowly, slowly this dark line sank lower, till, one by one, at last, the peaks caught first a pale pink flush; then a sudden golden glory flashed from one to the other, as they leapt joyfully into life. It is a supreme moment this first burst of life and light over the sleeping world, as one can only see it on rare days and in rare places like the Monte Generoso. The earth—enough of it at least for us to picture to ourselves the whole—lies at our feet; and we feel as the Saviour might have felt, when from the top of that high mountain he beheld the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them. Strangely and solemnly may we image to our fancy the lives that are being lived down in those cities of the plain: how many are waking at this very moment to toil and a painful weariness, to sorrow, or to "that unrest which men miscall delight;" while we upon our mountain buttress, suspended in mid-heaven and for a while removed from daily cares, are drinking in the beauty of the world that God has made so fair and wonderful. From this same eyrie, only a few years ago, the hostile armies of France, Italy, and Austria might have been watched moving in dim masses across the plains, for the possession of which they were to clash in mortal fight at Solferino and Magenta. All is peaceful now. It is hard to picture the waving corn-fields trodden down, the burning villages and ransacked vineyards, all the horrors of real war to which that fertile plain has been so often the prey. But now these memories of

> "Old, unhappy, far-off things,
> And battles long ago,"

do but add a calm and beauty to the radiant scene that lies before us. And the thoughts which it suggests, the images with which it stores our mind, are not without their noblest uses. The glory of the world sinks deeper into our shallow souls than we well know; and the spirit of its splendour is always ready to revisit us on dark and dreary days at home with an unspeakable refreshment. Even as I write, I seem to see the golden glow sweeping in broad waves over the purple hills nearer and nearer, till the lake brightens at our feet, and the windows of Lugano flash with sunlight, and little boats creep forth across the water like spiders on a pond, leaving an arrowy track of light upon the green behind them, while Monte Salvadore with its tiny chapel and a patch of the further landscape are still kept in darkness by the shadow of the Generoso itself. The birds wake into song as the sun's light comes; cuckoo answers cuckoo from ridge to ridge; dogs bark; and even the sounds of human life rise up to us: children's voices and the murmurs of the market-place ascending faintly from the many villages hidden among the chestnut-trees beneath our feet; while the creaking of a cart we can but just see slowly crawling along the straight road by the lake, is heard at intervals.

The full beauty of the sunrise is but brief. Already the low lakelike mists we saw last night have risen and spread, and shaken themselves out into masses of summer clouds, which, floating upward, threaten to envelop us upon our vantage-ground. Meanwhile they form a changeful sea below, blotting out the plain, surging up into the valleys with the movement of a billowy tide, attacking the lower heights like the advance-guard of a besieging army, but daring not as yet to invade the

cold and solemn solitudes of the snowy Alps. These, too, in time, when the sun's heat has grown strongest, will be folded in their midday pall of sheltering vapour.

The very summit of Monte Generoso must not be left without a word of notice. The path to it is as easy as the sheep-walks on an English down, though cut along grass-slopes where a roll would end in death. At the top the view is much the same, as far as the grand features go, as that which is commanded from the cliff by the hotel. But the rocks here are crowded with rare Alpine flowers—delicate golden auriculas with powdery leaves and stems, pale yellow cowslips, soldanellas at the edge of lingering patches of the winter snow, blue gentians, and the frail, rosy-tipped ranunculus, called glacialis. Their blooming time is brief. When summer comes the mountain will be bare and burned, like all Italian hills. The Generoso is a very dry mountain, silent and solemn from its want of streams. There is no sound of falling waters on its crags; no musical rivulets flow down its sides, led carefully along the slopes, as in Switzerland, by the peasants, to keep their hay-crops green and gladden the thirsty turf throughout the heat and drought of summer. The soil is a Jurassic limestone: the rain penetrates the porous rock, and sinks through cracks and fissures, to reappear above the base of the mountain in a full-grown stream. This is a defect in the Generoso, as much to be regretted as the want of shade upon its higher pastures. Here, as elsewhere in Piedmont, the forests are cut exclusively for charcoal; the beech-scrub, which covers large tracts of the hills, never having the chance of growing into trees much higher than a man. It is this which makes an Italian mountain at a distance look woolly, like a sheep's back.

Among the brushwood, however, lilies-of-the-valley and Solomon's seals delight to grow; and the league-long beds of wild strawberries prove that when the laburnums have faded, the mountain will become a garden of feasting.

It was on the crest of Monte Generoso, late one afternoon in May, that we saw a sight of great beauty. The sun had yet about an hour before it sank behind the peaks of Monte Rosa, and the sky was clear, except for a few white clouds that floated across the plain of Lombardy. Then as we sat upon the crags, tufted with soldanellas and auriculas, we could see a fleecy vapour gliding upward from the hollows of the mountain, very thin and pale, yet dense enough to blot the landscape to the south and east from sight. It rose with an imperceptible motion, as the Oceanides might have soared from the sea to comfort Prometheus in the tragedy of Æschylus. Already the sun had touched its upper edge with gold, and we were expecting to be enveloped in a mist; when suddenly upon the outspread sheet before us there appeared two forms, larger than life, yet not gigantic, surrounded with haloes of such tempered iridescence as the moon half hidden by a summer cloud is wont to make. They were the glorified figures of ourselves; and what we did, the phantoms mocked, rising or bowing, or spreading wide their arms. Some scarce-felt breeze prevented the vapour from passing across the ridge to westward, though it still rose from beneath, and kept fading away into thin air above our heads. Therefore the vision lasted as long as the sun stayed yet above the Alps; and the images with their aureoles shrank and dilated with the undulations of the mist. I could not but think of that old formula for an anthropomorphic Deity—"the Brocken-spectre of the human spirit pro-

jected on the mists of the Non-ego." Even like those cloud-phantoms are the gods made in the image of man, who have been worshipped through successive ages of the world, gods dowered with like passions to those of the races who have crouched before them, gods cruel and malignant and lustful, jealous and noble and just, radiant or gloomy, the counterparts of men upon a vast and shadowy scale. But here another question rose. If the gods that men have made and ignorantly worshipped be really but glorified copies of their own souls, where is the sun in this parallel? Without the sun's rays the mists of Monte Generoso could have shown no shadowy forms. Without some other power than the mind of man, could men have fashioned for themselves those ideals that they named their gods? Unseen by Greek, or Norseman, or Hindoo, the potent force by which alone they could externalise their image, existed outside them, independent of their thought. Nor does the trite epigram touch the surface of the real mystery. The sun, the human beings on the mountain, and the mists are all parts of one material universe: the transient phenomenon we witnessed was but the effect of a chance combination. Is, then, the anthropomorphic God as momentary and as accidental in the system of the world as that vapoury spectre? The God in whom we live and move and have our being must be far more all-pervasive, more incognisable by the souls of men, who doubt not for one moment of his presence and his power. Except for purposes of rhetoric the metaphor that seemed so clever fails. Nor, when once such thoughts have been stirred in us by such a sight, can we do better than repeat Goethe's sublime profession of a philosophic mysticism. This translation I made one morning on the Pasterze Gletscher beneath the spires of the Gross Glockner :—

To Him who from eternity, self-stirred,
Himself hath made by His creative word!
To Him, supreme, who causeth Faith to be,
Trust, Hope, Love, Power, and endless Energy!
To Him, who, seek to name Him as we will,
Unknown within Himself abideth still!

Strain ear and eye, till sight and sense be dim;
Thou 'lt find but faint similitudes of Him:
Yea, and thy spirit in her flight of flame
Still strives to gauge the symbol and the name:
Charmed and compelled thou climb'st from height to height,
And round thy path the world shines wondrous bright;
Time, Space, and Size, and Distance cease to be,
And every step is fresh infinity.

What were the God who sat outside to scan
The spheres that 'neath His finger circling ran?
God dwells within, and moves the world and moulds,
Himself and Nature in one form enfolds:
Thus all that lives in Him and breathes and is,
Shall ne'er His puissance, ne'er His spirit miss.

The soul of man, too, is a universe:
Whence follows it that race with race concurs
In naming all it knows of good and true
God,—yea, its own God; and with homage due
Surrenders to His sway both earth and heaven;
Fears Him, and loves, where place for love is given.

THE LOVE OF THE ALPS.*

OF all the joys in life, none is greater than the joy of arriving on the outskirts of Switzerland at the end of a long dusty day's journey from Paris. The true epicure in refined pleasures will never travel to Basle by night. He courts the heat of the sun and the monotony of French plains,—their sluggish streams and never-ending poplar-trees,—for the sake of the evening coolness and the gradual approach to the great Alps, which await him at the close of day. It is about Mulhausen that he begins to feel a change in the landscape. The fields broaden into rolling downs, watered by clear and running streams; the green Swiss thistle grows by river-side and cowshed; pines begin to tuft the slopes of gently rising hills; and now the sun has set, the stars come out, first Hesper, then the troop of lesser lights; and he feels—yes, indeed, there is now no mistake—the well-known, well-loved, magical fresh air, that never fails to blow from snowy mountains and meadows watered by perennial streams. The last hour is one of exquisite enjoyment, and when he reaches Basle, he scarcely sleeps all night for hearing the swift Rhine beneath the balconies, and knowing that the moon is shining on its waters, through the town, beneath the bridges, between pasture-lands and copses, up the still mountain-girdled valleys to the ice-caves where the water springs. There is nothing in all experience of

* This Essay was written in 1866, and published in 1867.

travelling like this. We may greet the Mediterranean at Marseilles with enthusiasm; on entering Rome by the Porta del Popolo, we may reflect with pride that we have reached the goal of our pilgrimage, and are at last among world-shaking memories. But neither Rome nor the Riviera wins our hearts like Switzerland. We do not lie awake in London thinking of them; we do not long so intensely, as the year comes round, to revisit them. Our affection is less a passion than that which we cherish for Switzerland.

Why, then, is this? What, after all, is the love of the Alps, and when and where did it begin? It is easier to ask these questions than to answer them. The classic nations hated mountains. Greek and Roman poets talk of them with disgust and dread. Nothing could have been more depressing to a courtier of Augustus than residence at Aosta, even though he found his theatres and triumphal arches there. Wherever classical feeling has predominated, this has been the case. Cellini's Memoirs, written in the height of pagan Renaissance, well express the aversion which a Florentine or Roman felt for the inhospitable wildernesses of Switzerland.* Dryden, in his dedication to "The Indian Emperor," says, "High objects, it is true, attract the sight; but it looks up with pain on craggy rocks and barren mountains, and continues not intent on any object which is wanting in shades and green to entertain it." Addison and Grey had no better epithets than "rugged," "horrid," and the like for Alpine landscape. The classic spirit was adverse to enthusiasm for mere nature. Humanity was too prominent, and city life absorbed all interests,—not to speak of what perhaps is the weightiest reason—that solitude, indifferent accommodation, and imperfect means

* See, however, what is said about Leo Battista Alberti on p. 243.

of travelling, rendered mountainous countries peculiarly disagreeable. It is impossible to enjoy art or nature while suffering from fatigue and cold, dreading the attacks of robbers, and wondering whether you will find food and shelter at the end of your day's journey. Nor was it different in the middle ages. Then individuals had either no leisure from war or strife with the elements, or else they devoted themselves to the salvation of their souls. But when the ideas of the middle ages had decayed, when improved arts of life had freed men from servile subjection to daily needs, when the bondage of religious tyranny had been thrown off and political liberty allowed the full development of tastes and instincts, when, moreover, the classical traditions had lost their power, and courts and coteries became too narrow for the activity of man,—then suddenly it was discovered that Nature in herself possessed transcendant charms. It may seem absurd to class them altogether; yet there is no doubt that the French Revolution, the criticism of the Bible, Pantheistic forms of religious feeling, landscape-painting, Alpine travelling, and the poetry of Nature, are all signs of the same movement—of a new Renaissance. Limitations of every sort have been shaken off during the last century; all forms have been destroyed, all questions asked. The classical spirit loved to arrange, model, preserve traditions, obey laws. We are intolerant of everything that is not simple, unbiassed by prescription, liberal as the wind, and natural as the mountain crags. We go to feed this spirit of freedom among the Alps. What the virgin forests of America are to the Americans, the Alps are to us. What there is in these huge blocks and walls of granite crowned with ice that fascinates us, it is hard to analyse. Why, seeing that we find them so attractive, they should have

repelled our ancestors of the fourth generation and all the world before them, is another mystery. We cannot explain what *rapport* there is between our human souls and these inequalities in the surface of the earth which we call Alps. Tennyson speaks of

> "Some vague emotion of delight
> In gazing up an Alpine height,"

and its vagueness eludes definition. The interest which physical science has created for natural objects has something to do with it. Curiosity and the charm of novelty increase this interest. No towns, no cultivated tracts of Europe, however beautiful, form such a contrast to our London life as Switzerland. Then there is the health and joy that comes from exercise in open air; the senses freshened by good sleep; the blood quickened by a lighter and rarer atmosphere. Our modes of life, the breaking down of class privileges, the extension of education, which contribute to make the individual greater and society less, render the solitude of mountains refreshing. Facilities of travelling and improved accommodation leave us free to enjoy the natural beauty which we seek. Our minds, too, are prepared to sympathise with the inanimate world; we have learned to look on the universe as a whole, and ourselves as a part of it, related by close ties of friendship to all its other members. Shelley's, Wordsworth's, Goethe's poetry has taught us this; we are all more or less Pantheists, worshippers of "God in Nature," convinced of the omnipresence of the informing mind.

Thus, when we admire the Alps, we are after all but children of the century. We follow its inspiration blindly; and while we think ourselves spontaneous in our ecstasy, perform the part for which we have been

trained from childhood by the atmosphere in which we live. It is this very unconsciousness and universality of the impulse we obey which makes it hard to analyse. Contemporary history is difficult to write; to define the spirit of the age in which we live is still more difficult; to account for "impressions which owe all their force to their identity with themselves" is most difficult of all. We must be content to feel, and not to analyse.

Rousseau has the credit of having invented the love of Nature. Perhaps he first expressed, in literature, the pleasures of open life among the mountains, of walking tours, of the "*école buissonnière*," away from courts, and schools, and cities, which it is the fashion now to love. His bourgeois birth and tastes, his peculiar religious and social views, his intense self-engrossment,—all favoured the development of Nature-worship. But Rousseau was not alone, nor yet creative, in this instance. He was but one of the earliest to seize and express a new idea of growing humanity. For those who seem to be the most original in their inauguration of periods are only such as have been favourably placed by birth and education to imbibe the floating creeds of the whole race. They resemble the first cases of an epidemic, which become the centres of infection and propagate disease. At the time of Rousseau's greatness the French people were initiative. In politics, in literature, in fashions, and in philosophy, they had for some time led the taste of Europe. But the sentiment which first received a clear and powerful expression in the works of Rousseau, soon declared itself in the arts and literature of other nations. Goethe, Wordsworth, and the earlier landscape-painters, proved that Germany and England were not far behind the French. In England this love of Nature for its own sake is indigenous, and has at all times been peculiarly

characteristic of our genius. Therefore it is not surprising that our life and literature and art have been foremost in developing the sentiment of which we are speaking. Our poets, painters, and prose writers gave the tone to European thought in this respect. Our travellers in search of the adventurous and picturesque, our Alpine Club, have made of Switzerland an English playground.

The greatest period in our history was but a foreshadowing of this. To return to Nature-worship was but to reassume the habits of the Elizabethan age, altered indeed by all the changes of religion, politics, society, and science which the last three centuries have wrought, yet still, in its original love of free open life among the fields and woods, and on the sea, the same. Now the French national genius is classical. It reverts to the age of Louis XIV., and Rousseauism in their literature is as true an innovation and parenthesis as Pope-and-Drydenism was in ours. As in the age of the Reformation, so in this, the German element of the modern character predominates. During the two centuries from which we have emerged, the Latin element had the upper hand. Our love of the Alps is a Gothic, a Teutonic, instinct; sympathetic with all that is vague, infinite, and insubordinate to rules, at war with all that is defined and systematic in our genius. This we may perceive in individuals as well as in the broader aspects of arts and literatures. The classically-minded man, the reader of Latin poets, the lover of brilliant conversation, the frequenter of clubs and drawing-rooms, nice in his personal requirements, scrupulous in his choice of words, averse to unnecessary physical exertion, preferring town to country life, *cannot* deeply feel the charm of the Alps. Such a man will dislike German art, and however much he may strive to be Catholic in his tastes, will find

as he grows older that his liking for Gothic architecture and modern painting diminish almost to aversion before an increasing admiration for Greek peristyles and the Medicean Venus. If in respect of speculation all men are either Platonists or Aristotelians, in respect of taste all men are either Greek or German.

At present the German, the indefinite, the natural, commands; the Greek, the finite, the cultivated, is in abeyance. We who talk so much about the feeling of the Alps, are creatures, not creators of our *cultus*,—a strange reflection, proving how much greater man is than men, the common reason of the age in which we live than our own reasons, its constituents and subjects.

Perhaps it is our modern tendency to "individualism" which makes the Alps so much to us. Society is there reduced to a vanishing point—no claims are made on human sympathies—there is no need to toil in yoke-service with our fellows. We may be alone, dream our own dreams, and sound the depths of personality without the reproach of selfishness, without a restless wish to join in action or money-making or the pursuit of fame. To habitual residents among the Alps this absence of social duties and advantages may be barbarising, even brutalising. But to men wearied with too much civilisation, and deafened by the noise of great cities, it is beyond measure refreshing. Then, again, among the mountains history finds no place. The Alps have no past nor present nor future. The human beings who live upon their sides are at odds with nature, clinging on for bare existence to the soil, sheltering themselves beneath protecting rocks from avalanches, damming up destructive streams, all but annihilated every spring. Man, who is paramount in the plain, is nothing here. His arts and sciences, and dynasties, and

modes of life, and mighty works, and conquests and decays, demand our whole attention in Italy or Egypt. But here the mountains, immemorially the same, which were, which are, and which are to be, present a theatre on which the soul breathes freely and feels herself alone. Around her on all sides is God, and Nature, who is here the face of God and not the slave of man. The spirit of the world hath here not yet grown old. She is as young as on the first day; and the Alps are a symbol of the self-creating, self-sufficing, self-enjoying universe which lives for its own ends. For why do the slopes gleam with flowers, and the hillsides deck themselves with grass, and the inaccessible ledges of black rock bear their tufts of crimson primroses and flaunting tiger-lilies? Why, morning after morning, does the red dawn flush the pinnacles of Monte Rosa above cloud and mist unheeded? Why does the torrent shout, the avalanche reply in thunder to the music of the sun, the trees and rocks and meadows cry their "Holy, Holy, Holy"? Surely not for us. We are an accident here, and even the few men whose eyes are fixed habitually upon these things are dead to them—the peasants do not even know the names of their own flowers, and sigh with envy when you tell them of the plains of Lincolnshire or Russian steppes.

But indeed there is something awful in the Alpine elevation above human things. We do not love Switzerland merely because we associate its thought with recollections of holidays and health and joyfulness. Some of the most solemn moments of life are spent high up above among the mountains, on the barren tops of rocky passes, where the soul has seemed to hear in solitude a low controlling voice. It is almost necessary for the development of our deepest affections that some

sad and sombre moments should be interchanged with hours of merriment and elasticity. It is this variety in the woof of daily life which endears our home to us; and perhaps none have fully loved the Alps who have not spent some days of meditation, or it may be of sorrow, among their solitudes. Splendid scenery, like music, has the power to make "of grief itself a fiery chariot for mounting above the sources of grief," to ennoble and refine our passions, and to teach us that our lives are merely moments in the years of the eternal Being. There are many, perhaps, who, within sight of some great scene among the Alps, upon the height of the Stelvio or the slopes of Mürren, or at night in the valley of Cormayeur, have felt themselves raised above cares and doubts and miseries by the mere recognition of unchangeable magnificence; have found a deep peace in the sense of their own nothingness. It is not granted to us every day to stand upon these pinnacles of rest and faith above the world. But having once stood there, how can we forget the station? How can we fail, amid the tumult of our common cares, to feel at times the hush of that far-off tranquillity? When our life is most commonplace, when we are ill or weary in city streets, we can remember the clouds upon the mountains we have seen, the sound of innumerable waterfalls, and the scent of countless flowers. A photograph of Bisson's or of Braun's, the name of some well-known valley, the picture of some Alpine plant, rouses the sacred hunger in our souls, and stirs again the faith in beauty and in rest beyond ourselves which no man can take from us. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to everything which enables us to rise above depressing and enslaving circumstances, which brings us nearer in some way or other to what is eternal in the universe, and

which makes us know that, whether we live or die, suffer or enjoy, life and gladness are still strong in the world. On this account, the proper attitude of the soul among the Alps is one of silence. It is almost impossible without a kind of impiety to frame in words the feelings they inspire. Yet there are some sayings, hallowed by long usage, which throng the mind through a whole summer's day, and seem in harmony with its emotions—some portions of the Psalms or lines of greatest poets, inarticulate hymns of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, waifs and strays not always apposite, but linked by strong and subtle chains of feeling with the grandeur of the mountains. This reverential feeling for the Alps is connected with the Pantheistic form of our religious sentiments to which I have before alluded. It is a trite remark, that even devout men of the present generation prefer temples *not* made with hands to churches, and worship God in the fields more contentedly than in their pews. What Mr Ruskin calls "the instinctive sense of the divine presence not formed into distinct belief" lies at the root of our profound veneration for the nobler aspects of mountain scenery. This instinctive sense has been very variously expressed by Goethe in Faust's celebrated confession of faith, by Shelley in the stanzas of "Adonais" which begin, "He is made one with nature," by Wordsworth in the lines on Tintern Abbey, and lately by Mr Roden Noel in his noble poems of Pantheism. It is more or less strongly felt by all who have recognised the indubitable fact that religious belief is undergoing a sure process of change from the dogmatic distinctness of the past to some at present dimly descried creed of the future. Such periods of transition are of necessity full of discomfort, doubt, and anxiety, vague, variable, and unsatisfying. The men in

whose spirits the fermentation of the change is felt, who have abandoned their old moorings, and have not yet reached the haven for which they are steering, cannot but be indistinct and undecided in their faith. The universe of which they form a part becomes important to them in its infinite immensity. The principles of beauty, goodness, order, and law, no longer connected in their minds with definite articles of faith, find symbols in the outer world. They are glad to fly at certain moments from mankind and its oppressive problems, for which religion no longer provides a satisfactory solution, to Nature, where they vaguely localise the spirit that broods over us controlling all our being. For such men Goethe's hymn, already quoted,* is a form of faith, and born of such a mood are the following far humbler verses :—

At Mürren let the morning lead thee out
To walk upon the cold and cloven hills,
To hear the congregated mountains shout
Their pæan of a thousand foaming rills.
Raimented with intolerable light
The snow-peaks stand above thee, row on row
Arising, each a seraph in his might;
An organ each of varied stop doth blow.
Heaven's azure dome trembles through all her spheres,
Feeling that music vibrate; and the sun
Raises his tenor as he upward steers,
And all the glory-coated mists that run
Below him in the valley, hear his voice,
And cry unto the dewy fields, Rejoice!

There is a profound sympathy between music and fine scenery: they both affect us in the same way,

* P. 294.

stirring strong but undefined emotions, which express themselves in "idle tears," or evoking thoughts "which lie," as Wordsworth says, "too deep for tears," beyond the reach of any words. How little we know what multitudes of mingling reminiscences, held in solution by the mind, and colouring its fancy with the iridescence of variable hues, go to make up the sentiments which music or which mountains stir. It is the very vagueness, changefulness, and dreamlike indistinctness of these feelings which cause their charm; they harmonise with the haziness of our beliefs and seem to make our very doubts melodious. For this reason it is obvious that unrestrained indulgence in the pleasures of music or of scenery may tend to destroy habits of clear thinking, sentimentalise the mind, and render it more apt to entertain embryonic fancies than to bring ideas to definite perfection.

If some hours of thoughtfulness and seclusion are necessary to the development of a true love for the Alps, it is no less essential to a right understanding of their beauty that we should pass some wet and gloomy days among the mountains. The unclouded sunsets and sunrises which often follow one another in September in the Alps, have something terrible. They produce a satiety of splendour, and oppress the mind with a sense of perpetuity. I remember spending such a season in one of the Oberland valleys, high up above the pine-trees, in a little châlet. Morning after morning I awoke to see the sunbeams glittering on the Eiger and the Jungfrau; noon after noon the snow-fields blazed beneath a steady fire; evening after evening they shone like beacons in the red light of the setting sun. Then peak by peak they lost the glow; the soul passed from them, and they stood pale yet weirdly garish against the darkened sky. The

stars came out, the moon shone, but not a cloud sailed over the untroubled heavens. Thus day after day for several weeks there was no change, till I was seized with an overpowering horror of unbroken calm. I left the valley for a time; and when I returned to it in wind and rain, I found that the partial veiling of the mountain heights restored the charm which I had lost and made me feel once more at home. The landscape takes a graver tone beneath the mist that hides the higher peaks, and comes drifting, creeping, feeling, through the pines upon their slopes—white, silent, blinding vapour wreaths around the sable spires. Sometimes the cloud descends and blots out everything. Again it lifts a little, showing cottages and distant Alps beneath its skirts. Then it sweeps over the whole valley like a veil, just broken here and there above a lonely châlet or a thread of distant dangling torrent foam. Sounds, too, beneath the mist are more strange. The torrent seems to have a hoarser voice and grinds the stones more passionately against its boulders. The cry of shepherds through the fog suggests the loneliness and danger of the hills. The bleating of penned sheep or goats, and the tinkling of the cow-bells, are mysteriously distant and yet distinct in the dull dead air. Then, again, how immeasurably high above our heads appear the domes and peaks of snow revealed through chasms in the drifting cloud; how desolate the glaciers and the avalanches in gleams of light that struggle through the mist! There is a leaden glare peculiar to clouds, which makes the snow and ice more lurid. Not far from the house where I am writing, the avalanche that swept away the bridge last winter is lying now, dripping away, dank and dirty, like a rotting whale. I can see it from my window, green beech-

boughs nodding over it, forlorn larches bending their tattered branches by its side, splinters of broken pine protruding from its muddy caves, the boulders on its flank, and the hoarse hungry torrent tossing up its tongues to lick the ragged edge of snow. Close by, the meadows, spangled with yellow flowers and red and blue, look even more brilliant than if the sun were shining on them. Every cup and blade of grass is drinking. But the scene changes; the mist has turned into rain-clouds, and the steady rain drips down, incessant, blotting out the view. Then, too, what a joy it is if the clouds break towards evening with a north wind, and a rainbow in the valley gives promise of a bright to-morrow. We look up to the cliffs above our heads, and see that they have just been powdered with the snow that is a sign of better weather.

Such rainy days ought to be spent in places like Seelisberg and Mürren, at the edge of precipices, in front of mountains, or above a lake. The cloud-masses crawl and tumble about the valleys like a brood of dragons; now creeping along the ledges of the rock with sinuous self-adjustment to its turns and twists; now launching out into the deep, repelled by battling winds, or driven onward in a coil of twisted and contorted serpent curls. In the midst of summer these wet seasons often end in a heavy fall of snow. You wake some morning to see the meadows which last night were gay with July flowers huddled up in snow a foot in depth. But fair weather does not tarry long to reappear. You put on your thickest boots and sally forth to find the great cups of the gentians full of snow, and to watch the rising of the cloud-wreaths under the hot sun. Bad dreams or sickly thoughts, dissipated by returning daylight or a friend's face, do not fly away more rapidly and

pleasantly than those swift glory-coated mists that lose themselves we know not where in the blue depths of the sky.

In contrast with these rainy days nothing can be more perfect than clear moonlight nights. There is a terrace upon the roof of the inn at Cormayeur where one may spend hours in the silent watches, when all the world has gone to sleep beneath. The Mont Chétif and the Mont de la Saxe form a gigantic portal not unworthy of the pile that lies beyond. For Mont Blanc resembles a vast cathedral; its countless spires are scattered over a mass like that of the Duomo at Milan, rising into one tower at the end. By night the glaciers glitter in the steady moon; domes, pinnacles, and buttresses stand clear of clouds. Needles of every height and most fantastic shapes rise from the central ridge, some solitary like sharp arrows shot against the sky, some clustering into sheaves. On every horn of snow and bank of grassy hill stars sparkle, rising, setting, rolling round through the long silent night. Moonlight simplifies and softens the landscape. Colours become scarcely distinguishable, and forms, deprived of half their detail, gain in majesty and size. The mountains seem greater far by night than day—higher heights and deeper depths, more snowy pyramids, more beetling crags, softer meadows, and darker pines. The whole valley is hushed, but for the torrent and the chirping grasshopper and the striking of the village clocks. The black tower and the houses of Cormayeur in the foreground gleam beneath the moon until she reaches the edge of the Cramont, and then sinks quietly away, once more to reappear among the pines, then finally to leave the valley dark beneath the shadow of the mountain's bulk. Meanwhile the heights of snow still glitter in the steady light: they, too, will

soon be dark, until the dawn breaks, tinging them with rose.

But it is not fair to dwell exclusively upon the more sombre aspect of Swiss beauty when there are so many lively scenes of which to speak. The sunlight and the freshness and the flowers of Alpine meadows form more than half the charm of Switzerland. The other day we walked to a pasture called the Col de Checruit, high up the valley of Cormayeur, where the spring was still in its first freshness. Gradually we climbed, by dusty roads and through hot fields where the grass had just been mown, beneath the fierce light of the morning sun. Not a breath of air was stirring, and the heavy pines hung overhead upon their crags, as if to fence the gorge from every wandering breeze. There is nothing more oppressive than these scorching sides of narrow rifts, shut in by woods and precipices. But suddenly the valley broadened, the pines and larches disappeared, and we found ourselves upon a wide green semicircle of the softest meadows. Little rills of water went rushing through them, rippling over pebbles, rustling under dock-leaves, and eddying against their wooden barriers. Far and wide "you scarce could see the grass for flowers," while on every side the tinkling of cow-bells, and the voices of shepherds calling to one another from the Alps, or singing at their work, were borne across the fields. As we climbed we came into still fresher pastures where the snow had scarcely melted. There the goats and cattle were collected, and the shepherds sat among them, fondling the kids and calling them by name. When they called, the creatures came, expecting salt and bread. It was pretty to see them lying near their masters, playing and butting at them with their horns, or bleating for the sweet rye-bread. The women

knitted stockings, laughing among themselves, and singing all the while. As soon as we reached them, they gathered round to talk. An old herdsman, who was clearly the patriarch of this Arcadia, asked us many questions in a slow deliberate voice. We told him who we were, and tried to interest him in the cattle-plague, which he appeared to regard as an evil very unreal and far away—like the murrain upon Pharaoh's herds which one reads about in Exodus. But he was courteous and polite, doing the honours of his pasture with simplicity and ease. He took us to his châlet and gave us bowls of pure cold milk. It was a funny little wooden house, clean and dark. The sky peeped through its tiles, and if shepherds were not in the habit of sleeping soundly all night long, they might count the setting and rising stars without lifting their heads from the pillow. He told us how far pleasanter they found the summer season than the long cold winter which they have to spend in gloomy houses in Cormayeur. This, indeed, is the true pastoral life which poets have described—a happy summer holiday among the flowers, well occupied with simple cares, and harassed by "no enemy but winter and rough weather."

Very much of the charm of Switzerland belongs to simple things—to greetings from the herdsmen, the "Guten Morgen" and "Guten Abend," that are invariably given and taken upon mountain paths; to the tame creatures, with their large dark eyes, who raise their heads one moment from the pasture while you pass; and to the plants that grow beneath your feet. The latter end of May is the time when spring begins in the high Alps. Wherever sunlight smiles away a patch of snow, the brown turf soon becomes green velvet, and the velvet stars itself with red and white and gold and

blue. You almost see the grass and lilies grow. First come pale crocuses and lilac soldanellas. These break the last dissolving clods of snow, and stand upon an island, with the cold wall they have thawed all round them. It is the fate of these poor flowers to spring and flourish on the very skirts of retreating winter; they soon wither—the frilled chalice of the soldanella shrivels up and the crocus fades away before the grass has grown: the sun, which is bringing all the other plants to life, scorches their tender petals. Often when summer has fairly come, you still may see their pearly cups and lilac bells by the side of avalanches, between the chill snow and the fiery sun, blooming and fading hour by hour. They have as it were but a Pisgah view of the promised land, of the spring which they are foremost to proclaim. Next come the clumsy gentians and yellow anemones, covered with soft down like fledgling birds. These are among the earliest and hardiest blossoms that embroider the high meadows with a diaper of blue and gold. About the same time primroses and auriculas begin to tuft the dripping rocks, while frail white fleurs-de-lis, like flakes of snow forgotten by the sun, and golden-balled ranunculuses join with forget-me-nots and cranesbill in a never-ending dance upon the grassy floor. Happy, too, is he who finds the lilies-of-the-valley clustering about the chestnut boles upon the Colma, or in the beechwood by the stream at Macugnaga, mixed with garnet-coloured columbines and fragrant white narcissus, which the people of the villages call "Angiolini." There, too, is Solomon's seal, with waxen bells and leaves expanded like the wings of hovering butterflies. But these lists of flowers are tiresome and cold; it would be better to draw the portrait of one which is particularly fascinating. I think that botanists have called it *Saxifraga*

cotyledon; yet, in spite of its long name, it is beautiful and poetic. London pride is the commonest of all the saxifrages; but the one of which I speak is as different from London pride as a Plantagenet upon his throne from that last Plantagenet who died obscure and penniless some years ago. It is a great majestic flower, which plumes the granite rocks of Monte Rosa in the spring. At other times of the year you see a little tuft of fleshy leaves set like a cushion on cold ledges and dark places of dripping cliffs. You take it for a stonecrop—one of those weeds doomed to obscurity, and safe from being picked because they are so uninviting—and you pass it by incuriously. But about June it puts forth its power, and from the cushion of pale leaves there springs a strong pink stem, which rises upward for awhile, and then curves down and breaks into a shower of snow-white blossoms. Far away the splendour gleams, hanging like a plume of ostrich-feathers from the roof of rock, waving to the wind, or stooping down to touch the water of the mountain stream that dashes it with dew. The snow at evening, glowing with a sunset flush, is not more rosy-pure than this cascade of pendent blossoms. It loves to be alone—inaccessible ledges, chasms where winds combat, or moist caverns overarched near thundering falls, are the places that it seeks. I will not compare it to a spirit of the mountains or to a proud lonely soul, for such comparisons desecrate the simplicity of nature, and no simile can add a glory to the flower. It seems to have a conscious life of its own, so large and glorious it is, so sensitive to every breath of air, so nobly placed upon its bending stem, so royal in its solitude. I first saw it years ago on the Simplon, feathering the drizzling crags above Isella. Then we found it near Baveno, in a crack of sombre cliff beneath the mines. The other day

we cut an armful opposite Varallo, by the Sesia, and then felt like murderers; it was so sad to hold in our hands the triumph of those many patient months, the full expansive life of the flower, the splendour visible from valleys and hillsides, the defenceless creature which had done its best to make the gloomy places of the Alps most beautiful.

After passing many weeks among the high Alps it is a pleasure to descend into the plains. The sunset, and sunrise, and the stars of Lombardy, its level horizons and vague misty distances, are a source of absolute relief after the narrow skies and embarrassed prospects of a mountain valley. Nor are the Alps themselves ever more imposing than when seen from Milan or the church tower of Chivasso or the terrace of Novara, with a foreground of Italian corn-fields and old city towers and rice-grounds golden-green beneath a Lombard sun. Half veiled by clouds the mountains rise like visionary fortress walls of a celestial city—unapproachable, beyond the range of mortal feet. But those who know by old experience what friendly châlets, and cool meadows, and clear streams are hidden in their folds and valleys, send forth fond thoughts and messages, like carrier-pigeons, from the marble parapets of Milan, crying, "Before another sun has set, I too shall rest beneath the shadow of their pines!" It is in truth not more than a day's journey from Milan to the brink of snow at Macugnaga. But very sad it is to *leave* the Alps, to stand upon the terraces of Berne and waft ineffectual farewells. The unsympathising Aar rushes beneath; and the snow-peaks, whom we love like friends, abide untroubled by the coming and the going of the world. The clouds drift over them—the sunset warms them with a fiery kiss. Night comes, and we are hurried far away to

wake beside the Seine, remembering, with a pang of jealous passion, that the flowers on Alpine meadows are still blooming, and the rivulets still flowing with a ceaseless song, while Paris shops are all we see, and all we hear is the dull clatter of a Paris crowd.

OLD TOWNS OF PROVENCE.

TRAVELLERS journeying southward from Paris first meet with olive-trees near Montdragon or Montélimart —little towns, with old historic names, upon the road to Orange. It is here that we begin to feel ourselves within the land of Provence, where the Romans found a second Italy, and where the autumn of their antique civilisation was followed, almost without an intermediate winter of barbarism, by the light and delicate spring-time of romance. Orange itself is full of Rome. Indeed, the ghost of the dead Empire seems there to be more real and living than the actual flesh and blood of modern time, as represented by narrow dirty streets and mean churches. It is the shell of the huge theatre, hollowed from the solid hill, and fronted with a wall that seems made rather to protect a city than to form a sounding-board for a stage, which first tells us that we have reached the old Arausio. Of all theatres this is the most impressive, stupendous, indestructible, the Colosseum hardly excepted; for in Rome herself we are prepared for something gigantic, while in the insignificant Arausio—a sort of antique Tewkesbury—to find such magnificence, durability, and vastness, impresses one with a nightmare sense that the old lioness of Empire can scarcely yet be dead. Standing before the colossal, towering, amorphous precipice which formed the background of the scena, we feel as if once more the "heart-shaking sound of Consul Romanus" might be

heard; as if Roman knights and deputies, arisen from the dead, with faces hard and stern as those of the warriors carved on Trajan's frieze, might take their seats beneath us in the orchestra, and, after proclamation made, the mortmain of imperial Rome be laid upon the comforts, liberties, and little gracefulnesses of our modern life. Nor is it unpleasant to be startled from such reverie by the voice of the old guardian upon the stage beneath, sonorously devolving the vacuous Alexandrines with which he once welcomed his ephemeral French emperor from Algiers. The little man is dim with distance, eclipsed and swallowed up by the shadows and grotesque fragments of the ruin in the midst of which he stands. But his voice—thanks to the inimitable constructive art of the ancient architect, which, even in the desolation of at least thirteen centuries, has not lost its cunning—emerges from the pigmy throat, and fills the whole vast hollow with its clear, if tiny, sound. Thank heaven, there is no danger of Roman resurrection here! The illusion is completely broken, and we turn to gather the first violets of February, and to wonder at the quaint postures of a praying mantis on the grass-grown tiers and porches fringed with fern.

The sense of Roman greatness which is so oppressive in Orange and in many other parts of Provence, is not felt at Avignon. Here we exchange the ghost of Imperial for the phantom of Ecclesiastical Rome. The fixed epithet of Avignon is Papal; and as the express train rushes over its bleak and wind-tormented plain, the heavy dungeon walls and battlemented towers of its palace fortress seem to warn us off, and bid us quickly leave the Babylon of exiled impious Antichrist. Avignon presents the bleakest, barest, greyest scene

upon a February morning, when the incessant *mistral* is blowing, and far and near, upon desolate hillside and sandy plain, the scanty trees are bent sideways, the crumbling castle turrets shivering like bleached skeletons in the dry ungenial air. Yet inside the town, all is not so dreary. The Papal palace, with its terrible Glacière, its chapel painted by Simone Memmi, its endless corridors and staircases, its torture-chamber, funnel-shaped to drown and suffocate—so runs tradition—the shrieks of wretches on the rack, is now a barrack, filled with lively little French soldiers, whose politeness, though sorely taxed, is never ruffled by the introduction of inquisitive visitors into their dormitories, eating-places, and drill-grounds. And strange, indeed, it is to see the lines of neat narrow barrack beds, between which the red-legged little men are shaving, polishing their guns, or mending their trousers, in those vaulted halls of popes and cardinals, those vast presence-chambers and audience-galleries, where Urban entertained St Catherine, where Rienzi came, a prisoner, to be stared at. Pass by the Glacière with a shudder, for it has still the reek of blood about it; and do not long delay in the cheerless dungeon of Rienzi. Time and regimental whitewash have swept these lurking-places of old crime very bare; but the parable of the seven devils is true in more senses than one, and the ghosts that return to haunt a deodorised, disinfected, garnished sepulchre are almost more ghastly than those which have never been disturbed from their old habitations.

Little by little the eye becomes accustomed to the bareness and greyness of this Provençal landscape; and then we find that the scenery round Avignon is eminently picturesque. The view from Les Doms—which is a hill above the Pope's palace,

the Acropolis, as it were, of Avignon—embraces a wide stretch of undulating champaign, bordered by low hills, and intersected by the flashing waters of the majestic Rhone. Across the stream stands Villeneuve, like a castle of romance, with its round stone towers fronting the gates and battlemented walls of the Papal city. A bridge used to connect the two towns, but it is now broken. The remaining fragment is of solid build, resting on great buttresses, one of which rises fantastically above the bridge into a little chapel. Such, one might fancy, was the bridge which Ariosto's Rodomonte kept on horse against the Paladins of Charlemagne, when angered by the loss of his love. Nor is it difficult to imagine Bradamante spurring up the slope against him with her magic lance in rest, and tilting him into the tawny waves beneath. On a clear October morning, when the vineyards are taking their last tints of gold and crimson, and the yellow foliage of the poplars by the river mingles with the sober greys of olive-trees and willows, every square inch of this landscape, glittering as it does with light and with colour, the more beautiful for its subtlety and rarity, would make a picture. Out of many such vignettes let us choose one. We are on the shore close by the ruined bridge, the rolling muddy Rhone in front; beyond it, by the towing-path, a tall strong cypress-tree rises beside a little house, and next to it a crucifix twelve feet or more in height, the Christ visible afar, stretched upon his red cross; arundo donax is waving all around, and willows near; behind, far off, soar the peaked hills, blue and pearled with clouds; past the cypress, on the Rhone, comes floating a long raft, swift through the stream, its rudder guided by a score of men: one standing erect upon the prow bends

forward to salute the cross; on flies the raft, the tall reeds rustle, and the cypress sleeps.

For those who have time to spare in going to or from the south it is worth while to spend a day or two in the most comfortable and characteristic of old French inns, the Hôtel de l'Europe, at Avignon. Should it rain, the museum of the town is worth a visit. It contains Horace Vernet's not uncelebrated picture of Mazeppa, and another, less famous, but perhaps more interesting, by swollen-cheeked David, the "genius in convulsion," as Carlyle has christened him. His canvas is unfinished. Who knows what cry of the Convention made the painter fling his palette down and leave the masterpiece he might have spoiled? For in its way the picture *is* a masterpiece. There lies Jean Barrad, drummer, aged fourteen, slain in La Vendée, a true patriot, who, while his life-blood flowed away, pressed the tricolor cockade to his heart, and murmured "Liberty!" David has treated his subject classically. The little drummer-boy, though French enough in feature and in feeling, lies, Greek-like, naked on the sand—a very Hyacinth of the Republic, La Vendée's Ilioneus. The tricolor cockade and the sentiment of upturned patriotic eyes are the only indications of his being a hero in his teens, a citizen who thought it sweet to die for France.

In fine weather a visit to Vaucluse should by no means be omitted, not so much, perhaps, for Petrarch's sake as for the interest of the drive, and for the marvel of the fountain of the Sorgues. For some time after leaving Avignon you jog along the level country between avenues of plane-trees; then comes a hilly ridge, on which the olives, mulberries, and vineyards join their colours and melt subtly into

distant purple. After crossing this, we reach L'Isle, an island village girdled by the gliding Sorgues, overshadowed with gigantic plane-boughs, and echoing to the plash of water dripped from mossy fern-tufted millwheels. Those who expect Petrarch's Sorgues to be some trickling poet's rill emerging from a damp grotto, may well be astounded at the rush and roar of this azure river so close upon its fountain-head. It has a volume and an arrow-like rapidity that communicate the feeling of exuberance and life. In passing let it not be forgotten that it was somewhere or other in this "chiaro fondo di Sorga," as Carlyle describes, that Jourdain, the hangman-hero of the Glacière, stuck fast upon his pony when flying from his foes, and had his accursed life, by some diabolical providence, spared for future butcheries. On we go across the austere plain, between fields of madder, the red roots of the "garance" lying in swathes along the furrows. In front rise ash-grey hills of barren rock, here and there crimsoned with the leaves of the dwarf sumach. A huge cliff stands up and seems to bar all passage. Yet the river foams in torrents at our side. Whence can it issue? What pass or cranny in that precipice is cloven for its escape? These questions grow in interest as we enter the narrow defile of limestone rocks which lead to the cliff-barrier, and find ourselves among the figs and olives of Vaucluse. Here is the village, the little church, the ugly column to Petrarch's memory, the inn, with its caricatures of Laura, and its excellent trout, the bridge and the many-flashing, eddying Sorgues, lashed by millwheels, broken by weirs, divided in its course, channeled and dyked, yet flowing irresistibly and undefiled. Blue, purple, greened by moss and water-weeds, silvered by snow-

white pebbles, on its pure smooth bed the river runs like elemental diamond, so clear and fresh. The rocks on either side are grey or yellow, terraced into oliveyards, with here and there a cypress, fig, or mulberry tree. Soon the gardens cease, and lentisk, rosemary, box, and ilex—shrubs of Provence—with here and there a sumach out of reach, cling to the hard stone. And so at last we are brought face to face with the sheer impassable precipice. At its basement sleeps a pool, perfectly untroubled; a lakelet in which the sheltering rocks and nestling wild figs are glassed as in a mirror—a mirror of blue-black water, like amethyst or fluor-spar—so pure, so still, that where it laps the pebbles you can scarcely say where air begins and water ends. This, then, is Petrarch's "grotto;" this is the fountain of Vaucluse. Up from its deep reservoirs, from the mysterious basements of the mountain, wells the silent stream; pauseless and motionless it fills its urn; rises unruffled; glides until the brink is reached; then overflows, and foams, and dashes noisily, a cataract, among the boulders of the hills. Nothing at Vaucluse is more impressive than the contrast between the tranquil silence of the fountain and the roar of the released impetuous river. Here we can realise the calm clear eyes of sculptured water-gods, their brimming urns, their gushing streams, the magic of the mountain-born and darkness-cradled flood. Or, again, looking up at the sheer steep cliff, 800 feet in height and arching slightly roofwise, so that no rain falls upon the cavern of the pool, we seem to see the stroke of Neptune's trident, the hoof of Pegasus, the force of Moses' rod, which cleft rocks and made waters gush forth in the desert. There is a strange fascination in the spot. As our eyes follow the white pebble which cleaves the surface and falls visibly, until the veil of

azure is too thick for sight to pierce, we feel as if some glamour were drawing us, like Hylas, to the hidden caves. At least we long to yield a prized and precious offering to the spring, to grace the nymph of Valchiusa with a pearl of price as token of our reverence and love.

Meanwhile nothing has been said about Petrarch, who himself said much about the spring, and complained against these very nymphs to whom we have in wish, at least, been scattering jewels, that they broke his banks and swallowed up his gardens every winter. At Vaucluse Petrarch loved, and lived, and sang. He has made Vaucluse famous, and will never be forgotten there. But for the present the fountain is even more attractive than the memory of the poet.*

The change from Avignon to Nismes is very trying to the latter place; for Nismes is not picturesquely or historically interesting. It is a prosperous modern French town with two almost perfect Roman monuments—Les Arènes and the Maison Carrée. The amphitheatre is a complete oval, visible at one glance. Its smooth white stone, even where it has not been restored, seems unimpaired by age; and Charles Martel's conflagration, when he burned the Saracen hornet's nest inside it, has only blackened the outer walls and arches venerably. Utility and perfect adaptation of means to ends form the beauty of Roman buildings. The science of construction and large intelligence displayed in them, their strength, simplicity, solidity, and purpose, are their glory. Perhaps there is only one modern edifice—Palladio's Palazzo della Ragione at Vicenza—which approaches the dignity and loftiness of Roman

* I have translated and printed at the end of this Essay some sonnets of Petrarch as a kind of palinode for this impertinence.

architecture; and this it does because of its absolute freedom from ornament, the vastness of its design, and the durability of its material. The temple, called the Maison Carrée, at Nismes, is also very perfect, and comprehended at one glance. Light, graceful, airy, but rather thin and narrow, it reminds one of the temple of Fortuna Virilis at Rome.

But if Nismes itself is not picturesque, its environs contain the wonderful Pont du Gard. A two or three hours' drive leads through a desolate country to the valley of the Gardon, where, suddenly, at a turn of the road, one comes upon the aqueduct. It is not within the scope of words to describe the impression produced by those vast arches, row above row, cutting the deep blue sky. The domed summer clouds sailing across them are comprehended in the gigantic span of their perfect semicircles, which seem rather to have been described by Miltonic compasses of Deity than by merely human mathematics. Yet, standing beneath one of the vaults and looking upward, you may read Roman numerals in order from I. to X., which prove their human origin well enough. Next to their strength, regularity, and magnitude, the most astonishing point about this triple tier of arches, piled one above the other to a height of 180 feet above a brawling stream between two barren hills, is their lightness. The arches are not thick; the causeway on the top is only just broad enough for three men to walk abreast. So smooth and perpendicular are the supporting walls that scarcely a shrub or tuft of grass has grown upon the aqueduct in all these years. And yet the huge fabric is strengthened by no buttress, has needed no repair. This lightness of structure, combined with such prodigious durability, produces the strongest sense of science and self-reliant power in the

men who designed it. None but Romans could have built such a monument, and have set it in such a place —a wilderness of rock and rolling hill, scantily covered with low brushwood, and browsed over by a few sheep— for such a purpose, too, in order to supply Nemausus with pure water. The modern town does pretty well without its water; but here subsists the civilisation of eighteen centuries past intact: the human labour yet remains, the measuring, contriving mind of man, shrinking from no obstacles, spanning the air, and in one edifice combining gigantic strength and perfect beauty. It is impossible not to echo Rousseau's words in such a place, and to say with him: "Le retentissement de mes pas dans ces immenses voûtes me faisait croire entendre la forte voix de ceux qui les avaient bâties. Je me perdais comme un insecte dans cette immensité. Je sentais, tout en me faisant petit, je ne sais quoi qui m'élevait l'âme; et je me disais en soupirant, Que ne suis-je né Romain!"

There is nothing at Arles which produces the same deep and indelible impression. Yet Arles is a far more interesting town than Nismes, partly because of the Rhone delta which begins there, partly because of its ruinous antiquity, and partly also because of the strong local character of its population. The amphitheatre of Arles is vaster and more sublime in its desolation than the tidy theatre at Nismes; the crypts, and dens, and subterranean passages suggest all manner of speculation as to the uses to which they may have been appropriated; while the broken galleries outside, intricate and black, and cavernous, like Piranesi's etchings of the "Carceri," present the wildest pictures of greatness in decay, fantastic dilapidation. The ruins of the smaller theatre, again, with their picturesquely grouped fragments

and their standing columns, might be sketched for a frontispiece to some dilettante work on classical antiquities. For the rest, perhaps the Aliscamps, or ancient Roman burial-ground, is the most interesting thing at Arles, not only because of Dante's celebrated lines in the canto of "Farinata:"—

> "Si come ad Arli ove 'l Rodano stagna,
> Fanno i sepolcri tutto 'l loco varo;"

but also because of the intrinsic picturesqueness of this avenue of sepulchres beneath green trees upon a long soft grassy field.

But as at Avignon and Nismes, so also at Arles, one of the chief attractions of the place lies at a distance, and requires a special expedition. The road to Les Baux crosses a true Provençal desert, where one realises the phrase, "Vieux comme les rochers de Provence,"—a wilderness of grey stone, here and there worn into cart-tracks, and tufted with rosemary, box, lavender, and lentisk. On the way it passes the Abbaye de Mont Majeur, a ruin of gigantic size, embracing all periods of architecture; where nothing seems to flourish now but henbane and the wild cucumber, or to breathe but a mumble-toothed and terrible old hag. The ruin stands above a desolate marsh, its vast Italian buildings of Palladian splendour looking more forlorn in their decay than the older and austerer mediæval towers, which rise up proud and patient and defiantly erect beneath the curse of time. When at length what used to be the castle town of Les Baux is reached, you find a naked mountain of yellow sandstone, worn away by nature into bastions and buttresses and coigns of vantage, sculptured by ancient art into palaces and chapels, battlements and dungeons. Now art and nature are

confounded in one ruin. Blocks of masonry lie cheek by jowl with masses of the rough-hewn rock: fallen cavern vaults are heaped round fragments of fan-shaped spandrel and clustered column-shaft; the doors and windows of old pleasure-rooms are hung with ivy and wild fig for tapestry; winding staircases start midway upon the cliff, and lead to vacancy. High overhead suspended in mid-air hang chambers—lady's bower or poet's singing-room—now inaccessible, the haunt of hawks and swallows. Within this rocky honeycomb—"cette ville en monolithe," as it has been aptly called, for it is literally scooped out of one mountain block—live about two hundred poor people, foddering their wretched goats at carved piscina and stately sideboards, erecting mud-beplastered hovels in the halls of feudal princes. Murray is wrong in calling the place a mediæval town in its original state, for anything more purely ruinous, more like a decayed old cheese, cannot possibly be conceived. The living only inhabit the tombs of the dead. At the end of the last century, when revolutionary effervescence was beginning to ferment, the people of Arles swept all its feudality away, defacing the very arms upon the town gate, and trampling the palace towers to dust.

The castle looks out across a vast extent of plain over Arles, the stagnant Rhone, the Camargue, and the salt pools of the lingering sea. In old days it was the eyrie of an eagle race called Seigneurs of Les Baux; and whether they took their title from the rock, or whether, as genealogists would have it, they gave the name of Oriental Balthazar—their reputed ancestor, one of the Magi—to the rock itself, remains a mystery not greatly worth the solving.

Anyhow, here they lived and flourished, these feudal

princes, bearing for their ensign a silver comet of sixteen rays upon a field of gules—themselves a comet race, baleful to the neighbouring lowlands, blazing with lurid splendour over wide tracts of country, a burning, raging, fiery-souled, swift-handed tribe, in whom a flame unquenchable glowed from son to sire through twice five hundred years until in the sixteenth century they were burned out, and nothing remained but cinders—these broken ruins of their eyrie, and some outworn and dusty titles. Very strange are the fate and history of these same titles: King of Arles, for instance, savouring of troubadour and high romance; Prince of Tarentum, smacking of old plays and Italian novels; Prince of Orange, which the Nassaus, through the Châlons, seized in all its emptiness long after the real principality had passed away, and came therewith to sit on England's throne.

The Les Baux in their heyday were patterns of feudal nobility. They warred incessantly with Counts of Provence, archbishops and burghers of Arles, Queens of Naples, Kings of Aragon. Crusading, pillaging, betraying, spending their substance on the sword, and buying it again by deeds of valour or imperial acts of favour, tuning troubadour harps, presiding at courts of love,—they filled a large page in the history of Southern France. The Les Baux were very superstitious. In the fulness of their prosperity they restricted the number of their dependent towns, or *places baussenques*, to seventy-nine, because these numbers in combination were thought to be of good omen to their house. Beral des Baux, Seigneur of Marseilles, was one day starting on a journey with his whole force to Avignon. He met an old woman herb-gathering at daybreak, and said, "Mother, hast

thou seen a crow or other bird?" "Yea," answered the crone, "on the trunk of a dead willow." Beral counted upon his fingers the day of the year, and turned bridle. With troubadours of name and note they had dealings, but not always to their own advantage, as the following story testifies. When the Baux and Berengers were struggling for the countship of Provence, Raymond Berenger, by his wife's counsel, went, attended by troubadours, to meet the Emperor Frederick at Milan. There he sued for the investiture and ratification of Provence. His troubadours sang and charmed Frederick; and the Emperor, for the joy he had in them, wrote his celebrated lines beginning—

"Plas mi cavalier Francez."

And when Berenger made his request he met with no refusal. Hearing thereof, the lords of Baux came down in wrath with a clangour of armed men. But music had already gained the day; and where the Phœbus of Provence had shone, the Æolus of storm-shaken Les Baux was powerless. Again, when Blacas, a knight of Provence, died, the great Sordello chanted one of his most fiery hymns, bidding the princes of Christendom flock round and eat the heart of the dead lord. "Let Rambaude des Baux," cries the bard, with a sarcasm that is clearly meant, but at this distance almost unintelligible, "take also a good piece, for she is fair and good and truly virtuous; let her keep it well who knows so well to husband her own weal." But the poets were not always adverse to the house of Baux. Fouquet, the beautiful and gentle melodist whom Dante placed in paradise, served Adelaisie, wife of Berald, with long service of unhappy love, and wrote upon her death "The Com-

plaint of Berald des Baux for Adelaisie." Guillaume de Cabestan loved Berangère des Baux, and was so loved by her that she gave him a philtre to drink, whereof he sickened and grew mad. Many more troubadours are cited as having frequented the castle of Les Baux, and among the members of the princely house were several poets.

Some of them were renowned for beauty. We hear of a Cécile, called Passe Rose, because of her exceeding loveliness; also of an unhappy François who, after passing eighteen years in prison, yet won the grace and love of Joan of Naples by his charms. But the real temper of this fierce tribe was not shown among troubadours, or in the courts of love and beauty. The stern and barren rock from which they sprang, and the comet of their scutcheon, are the true symbols of their nature. History records no end of their ravages and slaughters. It is a tedious catalogue of blood—how one prince put to fire and sword the whole town of Courthezon; how another was stabbed in prison by his wife; how a third besieged the castle of his niece, and sought to undermine her chamber, knowing her the while to be in childbed; how a fourth was flayed alive outside the walls of Avignon. There is nothing terrible, splendid, and savage, belonging to feudal history, of which an example may not be found in the annals of Les Baux, as narrated by their chronicler, Jules Canonge.

However abrupt may seem the transition from these memories of the ancient nobles of Les Baux to mere matters of travel and picturesqueness, it would be impossible to take leave of the old towns of Provence without glancing at the cathedrals of St Trophime at Arles, and of St Gilles—a village on the border

of the dreary flamingo-haunted Camargue. Both of these buildings have porches splendidly incrusted with sculptures, half-classical, half-mediæval, marking the transition from ancient to modern art. But that of St Gilles is by far the richer and more elaborate. The whole façade of this church is one mass of intricate decoration; Norman arches and carved lions, like those of Lombard architecture, mingling fantastically with Greek scrolls of fruit and flowers, with elegant Corinthian columns jutting out upon the church steps, and with the old conventional wave-border that is called Etruscan in our modern jargon. From the midst of florid fret and foliage lean mild faces of saints and Madonnas. Symbols of evangelists with half-human, half-animal eyes and wings, are interwoven with the leafy bowers of Cupids. Grave apostles stand erect beneath acanthus wreaths that ought to crisp the forehead of a laughing Faun or Bacchus. And yet so full, exuberant, and deftly-chosen are these various elements, that there remains no sense of incongruity or discord. The mediæval spirit had much trouble to disentangle itself from classic reminiscences; and, fortunately for the picturesqueness of St Gilles, it did not succeed. How strangely different is the result of this transition in the south from those severe and rigid forms which we call Romanesque in Germany and Normandy and England.

EIGHT SONNETS OF PETRARCH.

ON THE PAPAL COURT AT AVIGNON.

FOUNTAIN of woe! Harbour of endless ire!
Thou school of errors, haunt of heresies!
Once Rome, now Babylon, the world's disease,
That maddenest men with fears and fell desire!
O forge of fraud! O prison dark and dire,
Where dies the good, where evil breeds increase!
Thou living Hell! Wonders will never cease
If Christ rise not to purge thy sins with fire.
Founded in chaste and humble poverty,
Against thy founders thou dost raise thy horn,
Thou shameless harlot! And whence flows this pride?
Even from foul and loathed adultery,
The wage of lewdness. Constantine, return!
Not so: the felon world its fate must bide.

TO STEFANO COLONNA.

WRITTEN FROM VAUCLUSE.

GLORIOUS Colonna, thou on whose high head
Rest all our hopes and the great Latin name,
Whom from the narrow path of truth and fame
The wrath of Jove turned not with stormful dread:
Here are no palace-courts, no stage to tread;
But pines and oaks the shadowy valleys fill
Between the green fields and the neighbouring hill,
Where musing oft I climb by fancy led.
These lift from earth to heaven our soaring soul,
While the sweet nightingale, that in thick bowers
Through darkness pours her wail of tuneful woe,
Doth bend our charmèd breast to love's control;
But thou alone hast marred this bliss of ours,
Since from our side, dear lord, thou needs must go.

IN VITA DI MADONNA LAURA. XI.

ON LEAVING AVIGNON.

BACKWARD at every weary step and slow
These limbs I turn which with great pain I bear;
Then take I comfort from the fragrant air
That breathes from thee, and sighing onward go.
But when I think how joy is turned to woe,
Remembering my short life and whence I fare,
I stay my feet for anguish and despair,
And cast my tearful eyes on earth below.
At times amid the storm of misery
This doubt assails me: how frail limbs and poor
Can severed from their spirit hope to live.
Then answers Love: Hast thou no memory
How I to lovers this great guerdon give,
Free from all human bondage to endure?

IN VITA DI MADONNA LAURA. XII.

THOUGHTS IN ABSENCE.

THE wrinkled sire with hair like winter snow
Leaves the loved spot where he hath passed his years,
Leaves wife and children, dumb with bitter tears,
To see their father's tottering steps and slow.
Dragging his aged limbs with weary woe,
In these last days of life he nothing fears,
But with stout heart his fainting spirit cheers,
And spent and wayworn forward still doth go;
Then comes to Rome, following his heart's desire,
To gaze upon the portraiture of Him
Whom yet he hopes in heaven above to see:
Thus I, alas! my seeking spirit tire,
Lady, to find in other features dim
The longed for, loved, true lineaments of thee.

IN VITA DI MADONNA LAURA. LII.

OH THAT I HAD WINGS LIKE A DOVE!

I AM so tired beneath the ancient load!
Of my misdeeds and custom's tyranny,
That much I fear to fail upon the road
And yield my soul unto mine enemy.
'Tis true a friend from whom all splendour flowed,
To save me came with matchless courtesy;
Then flew far up from sight to heaven's abode,
So that I strive in vain his face to see.
Yet still his voice reverberates here below:
O ye who labour, lo! the path is here;
Come unto me if none your going stay!
What grace, what love, what fate surpassing fear
Shall give me wings like dove's wings soft as snow,
That I may rest and raise me from the clay?

IN MORTE DI MADONNA LAURA. XXIV.

THE eyes whereof I sang my fervid song,
The arms, the hands, the feet, the face benign,
Which severed me from what was rightly mine
And made me sole and strange amid the throng,
The crispèd curls of pure gold beautiful,
And those angelic smiles which once did shine,
Imparadising earth with joy divine,
Are now a little dust—dumb, deaf, and dull.
And yet I live! wherefore I weep and wail,
Left lone without the light I loved so long,
Storm-tossed upon a bark that hath no sail.
Then let me here give o'er my amorous song;
The fountains of old inspiration fail,
And nought but woe my dolorous chords prolong.

IN MORTE DI MADONNA LAURA. XXXIV.

In thought I raised me to the place where she
Whom still on earth I seek and find not, shines;
There 'mid the souls whom the third sphere confines,
More fair I found her and less proud to me.
She took my hand and said: Here shalt thou be
With me ensphered, unless desires mislead;
Lo! I am she who made thy bosom bleed,
Whose day ere eve was ended utterly:
My bliss no mortal heart can understand;
Thee only do I lack, and that which thou
So loved, now left on earth, my beauteous veil.
Ah! wherefore did she cease and loose my hand?
For at the sound of that celestial tale
I all but stayed in paradise till now.

IN MORTE DI MADONNA LAURA. LXXIV.

THE flower of angels and the spirits blest,
Burghers of heaven, on that first day when she
Who is my lady died, around her pressed
Fulfilled with wonder and with piety.
What light is this? what beauty manifest?
Marvelling they cried: for such supremacy
Of splendour in this age to our high rest
Hath never soared from earth's obscurity.
She, glad to have exchanged her spirit's place,
Consorts with those whose virtues most exceed;
At times the while she backward turns her face
To see me follow—seems to wait and plead:
Therefore toward heaven my will and soul I raise,
Because I hear her praying me to speed.

THE END.

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